

Hafa Adai!

Attachment of \$2.89M lien on IPI casino complex OK'd. **PAGE 2**

Esper defends firing of Navy ship captain over virus warning. **PAGE 7**

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Gas prices continue to drop

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**
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REPORTER

Reflecting the global decline in gas process, fuel prices in the CNMI saw its second rollback in a month and its fourth rollback of the year.

According to a source from Mobil Oil Mariana Islands, Inc., its fourth price rollback of the year happened last Wednesday

See GAS on Page 4

Gas prices continue to drop following the COVID-19 outbreak in the Marianas.

KIMBERLY BAUTISTA

118 to be released from quarantine

By **JUSTINE NAUTA**
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REPORTER

A total of 118 individuals who have completed the mandatory 14-day quarantine will be released from the Pacific Island Club isolation site in San Antonio this week, April 6 to April 12.

This group, composed of those who flew into the CNMI from Guam last March 23, were first quarantined at the Kanoa Resort in Susupe following Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' directive that required individuals entering the CNMI to be quarantined first at a designated site for 14 days.

Once an individual completes the quarantine period, the Commonwealth

Health Care Corp. will issue that individual a certificate indicating that they have successfully completed quarantine, according to a statement from press secretary Kevin Bautista.

The certificate does not mean that the individual is not at risk for possible infection of COVID-19. They

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AT A GLANCE

As of 5:15pm, April 6, 2020

GUAM	CNMI
Positive: 101*	Positive: 8
(DPHSS), 9** (NHRC)	Pending: 10
Recovered: 25	Deaths: 1
Deaths: 4	
*Tested by Guam Department of Public Health and Social Services Public Health Lab	
**Tested by the Naval Health Research Center in California	
Source: Joint Information Center-Guam, Commonwealth Health Care Corp.	

Pension cut looms

By **IVA MAURIN**
iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

CNMI government retirees will not get their full pension payment starting April 15.

In an open letter to retirees, surviving spouses, and

» **Legislator proposes solutions to halt pension cuts**

minor children beneficiaries, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres said that, starting with the scheduled payment next week, the CNMI government will not be able to get the funds needed to provide

See PENSION on Page 4

Americans brace for 'hardest, saddest' week of their lives

By **JIM MUSTIAN and FRANCES D'EMILIO**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK (AP)—Americans

braced for what the nation's top doctor warned Sunday would be "the hardest and saddest week" of their lives while Britain assumed the unwelcome mantle of deadliest coronavirus hot spot in Europe after a record 24-hour jump in deaths that surpassed even hard-hit Italy's.

Britain's own prime minister, Boris Johnson, said Sunday that the

See AMERICANS on Page 4

INSIDE



BUSINESS

Eats Easy is the CNMI's first food delivery app that aims to deliver meals straight to your door.

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ASIA

President Trump is seizing the coronavirus pandemic to push the cause of Taiwan.

PAGE 13



LIFE & STYLE

Britain needed a message of hope Sunday. The queen delivered it.

PAGE 15



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GOT A NEWS TIP?

TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

CNMI to get \$600K for this November elections

By IVA MAURIN
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REPORTER

The U.S. government is making sure that the November elections would push through despite the COVID-19 pandemic. In the newly-enacted Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, \$400 million has been included as part of the Help America Vote Act emergency funds, to help augment preparations for the elections, while the country is in the middle of the coronavirus threat. This is also to ensure the

Attachment of \$2.89M lien on IPI casino complex, 1.567 hectares of land ordered

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona yesterday ordered that, for the lien amount of \$2.89 million, a former contractor of Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC shall have a mechanic's lien to attach upon the improvements of IPI's hotel-casino complex in Garapan. Manglona ordered that U.S.A. Fanter Corp. Ltd. shall also have a mechanic's lien to attach upon IPI's real property interest in a Garapan lot measuring 1.567 hectares. The fee simple owner of the lot is the Commonwealth Investment Company LLC. IPI has a lease on the land. A mechanic's lien refers to a security interest in the title to property for the benefit of those who have supplied labor or materials that improve the property. In a notice yesterday to IPI and others, Manglona said that she made a probable cause finding last March 27 in favor of U.S.A. Fanter for the issuance and attachment of a mechanic's lien, that U.S.A. Fanter was able to establish probable cause to attach a lien on IPI's interest in the improvements and real property in Garapan known as the Imperial Pacific Resort. The judge said U.S.A. Fanter, a CNMI licensed construction contractor, incorporated materials and provided labor for the landscaping builder works contract at the Imperial Pacific Resort hotel-casino complex. Manglona said that included construction of retaining walls, stairways, side-walks, as well as excavation and backfilling. Manglona said U.S.A. Fanter established by probable cause that IPI owes it \$2,089,000 as the

safety of both voters and election workers. According to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP), the CNMI will receive over half a million dollars to help make elections happen on the islands this November. "The Commonwealth will receive an estimated \$600,000 of CARES Act funding to ensure the Nov. 3 federal election in the Marianas goes on, despite the coronavirus crisis," Sablan said. "Nationwide, the money can be used to implement vote-by-mail for all vot-

ers and to increase the availability of online registration and early voting, where that is not now offered. The grant can also increase voting sites to reduce crowding and keep in-person voters healthy." There will also be no local matching funds required. "COVID-19 has already led to the postponement of primary elections in some parts of the country...and a natural disaster in 2018, Super Typhoon Yutu, led to the delay of the general federal election in the Marianas, a first in modern U.S. history. We need to ensure that our democracy survives intact, even as the coronavirus disrupts so many other aspects of normal life," Sablan said. According to the delegate, the Federal Election Assistance Commission is required to distribute the CARES Act election security grants by April 26.

price agreed to be paid for the construction work performed. After finding probable cause during the March 27 hearing, Manglona set a bench trial for June 24, 2020, at 9am. U.S.A. Fanter, through counsel Colin Thompson, is suing IPI for breach of construction contract and unjust enrichment for allegedly refusing to pay \$2,089,345 over landscaping improvements for IPI's hotel-casino project. U.S.A. Fanter asked the court to hold IPI liable to pay \$2.08 million in contract damages. The company also sought payment for interest and attorney's fees. The plaintiff asked the court to attach a mechanic's lien to IPI's interests in the real property on the project. IPI, through counsel Joseph Horey, asked the court to dismiss the complaint or, in the alternative, suspend the proceedings pending mediation. Horey argued that U.S.A. Fanter has not complied with the mandatory mediation clause of their contract. U.S.A. Fanter and IPI executed the construction contract for the project on June 18, 2019. Thompson said the contractor repeatedly demanded that IPI pay all amounts due and owing for work performed, but IPI has failed to do so. U.S.A. Fanter demanded to mediate their claims last Dec. 29 but IPI refused, Thompson said. Another former IPI contractor, Pacific Rim Land Development LLC, also filed an application for a mechanic's lien on IPI's hotel-casino project and on the land that it sits on. Thompson is also counsel for that contractor. The court consolidated Pacific Rim's lawsuit and its application for a mechanic's lien. The suit and the mechanic's lien application are pending.

TOP PERFORMERS

Mount Carmel School congratulates these students for making it to the 3rd Quarter President's List & Honor Roll.

PRESIDENT'S LIST
Students must have a GPA of 4.00 or above and must attain character marks of VG or above.

1ST GRADE
Adam Spencer Dela Cruz
Aiyana Pangelinan
Aliyani Molly Ann Basa
Anah Bellah Guerrero
Avril Hershey Dimaculangan
Chloe Jane Militante
Chloe-Mae Taimanao
Christelle Ann Rodriguez
Clarise Garamonte
Drake Babauta
Dylan Thor Anguschi Barcinas
Elliott James Tkebui Iramk
Friella Huanne Dela Santa
Ian James De Leon
Ivan Fernand Fortades
John Damien Sablan
Jonathan Zhang
Keavene Punzalan
Kirk Ivan De Perio
Logan Propst
Madden Anthony
DeleonGuerrero
Minjoon (Michale) Jeon
Neia Dolana
Noreymal Tagabuel
Nicolo Gabriel Unay
Okamura Jaxon
Itisoorschigh Tagabuel
Oliveeah Julee Kaipat
Scarlett Shae Salas
Viane Johanna Magboo
Vinae Jaydene Pua
Vince Angelo Estella
Zayne Reyes

2ND GRADE
Adelle Jane Kautz
Ava Carmina Sablan
Avah Mae Delacruz
Cali Jade Cabrera
Chloe Anne Marie Matsunaga
Hyunseo Yun
Karl Angelo Diaz
Kathleen Cano
Mikayla Guerrero
Reef Cole Reyes
Victoria Eve Terlaje
Von Derick Lauron

3RD GRADE
Aaron Wu
Ava Pamparo
Bella Deleon Guerrero
Bentley James Albuen
Caydince Raine Masga
Celine Christley
Daniel Camacho
David Joseph Camacho
Donray Abholmwar Barcinas
Elijah Dela Cruz
Fatima Joy Dimaun
Gonshiro Pedro
Jose Sasamoto
James Matsumoto
Jaze Enzo San Nicolas
Joey Claude Mostales
Kainoa Tenorio
Leonmar Jaedon Regalado

Liana Margaret
Deleon Guerrero
Logan Matsumoto
Lyam Villagomez
Nico-Lahi Macaranas
O-Ren Fumiyo Sasamoto
Trisha Juliana Abuan
Xin Lei (Steven) Song
Zian Michael Obnimaga

4TH GRADE
Aya Santos
Cecilia R. Villagomez
Cyril Michael Pangilinan
Do Geon Kim
Isabella Soledad Demapan
Jadine Nicole Pangelinan
Jayson Jared Tagabuel
Jener Franz Pineda
Jessi Chen
Katherine Hwang
Layla Carmen Ann Palacios
Remiegem Melchor

5TH GRADE
Aiden Manuel Wesley
Akoni Matsumoto
Chan Seo Yeom
Chan Woong Yeom
Christine Rosanne Castro
Christopher James Dela Cruz
Enzo Umeki Sasamoto
Hiromi Rosa Sasamoto
Hope McQuay
Jeffrey Concepcion
Jose Clarence Tenorio
Justin Mallari
Kaden Christian Propst
Kamral Kanie Kiewol
Maya Jae Jung
Maya McQuay
Naomi Skye Matsumoto
Nicole Angela Pangilinan
Patricia Matsumoto
Patrick Guerrero
Sage R. Villagomez
Sarah Angela Melchor
Wayne Dominic Ano

6TH GRADE
Ainsley Ancheta
Arwen Hannah Bartolata
Asa Vanessa Backe
Ayanna Faith Matsumoto
Camron Xavier Pangelinan
Chae Eun Kim
Elise Maratita
Eliza Christley
Emmanuel Pontiveros
Gavril Myles Santiago
Jasmine Meleana
Deleon Guerrero
Jessiana Tenorio
Jieun Kwon
Kate Nicole Cabalbag
Lance Jericho Javier
Leonard Jake Regalado
Mikaebla Paige Mendoza
Mikayla Castro
Mya Pangelinan
Nyla Deleon Guerrero
Oscar Bien Buenafior
Patricia Denielle Lugtu
Seunghye Jeon
Sophia Tenorio
Valerie Anne Estella
William Matthew Cano

7TH GRADE
Hitomi Rosa Sasamoto
Irie Kane Camacho
Jamie Lee

Juncheol Hwang
Kaeli Pathil
Kelly Zheng
Laizza Vianca Mallari
Latisha Anne De Jesus
Malina Rose Tenorio
Princes Amanda Habal
Tricia Antonnette Palacios

8TH GRADE
Brandon Lee
Breanna Sue Mafnas
Devin Jordan Propst
Eunkyu (Joey) Hong
IG Kamiya Nicole Obnimaga
John Linden
Jonathan Sheu
Paul Angelo Santos
Ruben Antonio Guerrero

9TH GRADE
Brent Matthew Ortizo
Donnie James Jr. Militante
Francine Monique Albuen
Gerald Deleon Guerrero
Jia (Jenny) Yin
Jill Anne Marie Mallari
Kyla Monique Cabrera
Leunyce Regalado
Manuel Jacinto Pangelinan
Raven-Mae Driver
Renee Kiser
Yurihana Rosa Sasamoto

10TH GRADE
Aleia Santos
Christian Felix Guerrero
Christopher Adam Mafnas
Cory Lee
Fiona Marielle Bucalig
Hannah Lacap
Hyunjun Kim
Hyunkyuu Park
Jeffrey Sheu
Jeremiah Jerome Diaz
Jihwan (Sam) Ryu
JunBeom Kim
Larry Dean Cruz
Monique Laura Duenas
Raesyl Gerard Solis
Richard Jesus Villagomez
Robin Kyle Alvarez
Vaughn Andrei Mallari

11TH GRADE
Brandee Hunter
Brian Youn
Carmille Perez
Christian Dean Palattao
Connie Zhu
Katherine Avendano-Woodruff
Kevin Kang
Mikee Mame Mendoza
Reuben Christian Tomboc
Seung Ju Lee
Seungwoo (Raffy) Lee
Skyler Poon
Trinity Cruz
Victoria Nicole Santos
Vince Philip Salvador
Xavier Gatmaitan

12TH GRADE
Casey Pathil
Danielle Jaden Yamagata-Santos
Francesca Marie Bucalig
Haesu Yeo
Jeffrey Chua
Jim Michael Ham
Kalea Lou Borja
Katelyn Rabang

Lleyton Andre Javier
Nicole Pak
Riley Anne Buenaventura
Vincent John Reyes

HONOR ROLL
Students must have a GPA of 3.66 or above and must not have any behavior grade of U or NI.

1ST GRADE
Anaiah Roque
Angela Ma
Brayden Luke Repata
Joaquina Dominina Olopai
Solanakai Maratita
Yu Ma

2ND GRADE
Amber Faith Militante
Chloe Cepeda
Daniel Kang
Ezaela Patrice Camacho
Heaven Agnes
Deleon Guerrero
Jayda Milan Torres
Jeremy Terlaje
Kennani Vinae Villagomez
Khylee Ysabelle Santos
Ki Eun Lee
Krish Devjani
Lily Chantrea Lim
Lydia Xian
Manuel Villagomez
Paige Kanae Cabrera
Sia Choi

3RD GRADE
Caleb John Aldan
Hunter Torres
Miguel Garret Mendoza
Nea Zoe Dandan
Ryusei Asai

4TH GRADE
Aubrey Rae Quitugua
Cassidee Jolina Flores
Christopher Sablan
Dylan Niric
Eunbeen Hwang
Francisco Maratita
Kayla Larson
Kimason Cabrera
Krisha Devjani

5TH GRADE
Carly Kate Dela Cruz
Frank Anthony Reyes
Jupri Torres
Kesiil Camacho
Lexie Camacho
Pedro Jose Tomokane
Risha Cabrera
Seungwoo (Henri) Choi
Yukiko Kiyomi Sasamoto

6TH GRADE
Andrick Poon
Annieskha Arreza
Heleyna Frielle Dela Santa
Joseph Brandon Pangelinan
Julie Anne Chavez
Luis Manibusan
Michael Mercado
Quince Emanuele Tizon
Therese Joy Ogo

7TH GRADE
Ari James Toskas
Arturo Rodrigo Travilla
Audrein Jennifer Mallari

Breana Ysabel Patawaran
Carmelita Ann San Nicolas
Chelsy Anne Reyes
Dylan Santos
Irene Kim
Jada Chang
Jay Francis Dominic Pineda
Jee Woo Son
Nicole Erin Mariano
Vayden Matagolai
Zhen Ni Huang

8TH GRADE
Avah Marie Torres
Camille Alannah Sablan
Earle Gabreil San Nicolas
Elisha Joy Lacap
Gwen Tiffany Gamab
Ierlyma Nicole
Deleon Guerrero
Jerry Chen
Kriselle Bryana Mitzy Drilon
L'Wina Atalig
Marini Millo
Mercedes Cruz
Minki Jung
Tyana Kisha Tesiro
Vicente Reyes
Xin Wen Jin

9TH GRADE
Brissa Hunter
Derek Moritaro Sasamoto
Erin Frink
Jazmyn Phoeme Lopez
Keehara Nielsen Baldazo
Kina Dela Cruz
Leopoldo Naraja
Mathew Adrian Sablan
Moeisha Eleanor Cruz
Raeka Shereen Lantin
Vidal Jose Camacho

10TH GRADE
Cristina Bang
Esperanza Maria
Milagro Castro
Jae Uk Choi
Joshua Donovan Tenorio
Kaia Travilla
Kiana Lei Propst
Kwonjoon Ha
Lyndon Digno
Theresa Rose Schweiger
Victoria Ancheta
William Nathaniel Ano
Yu Jeong Son

11TH GRADE
Jieyu Lin
John Isaac San Nicolas
Kyle Attao
Lina Lee
Nathanael Ryne Cunanan
Penelope Sablan
Puti'on Palacios-Camacho
Raymalyn Guanlao
Sinahi Ray Cepeda

12TH GRADE
Alvin Palacios
Aven Evangelista
Chioni Dela Cruz
Dustin Ross Salilin
Jan Matthew Millo
Jehyuk Jung
Juan Vicente Blanco
Julia Taguchi
Keon Dodge Apolonio
Kimvherly Ann Dela Cruz
Seokyoung (Michelle) Kim
Walter Sablan

Man's request to open new suit vs FEMA is denied

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie.delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona denied yesterday a Russian national's request that the court open a new lawsuit against the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

In the same order, Manglona clarified the rationale behind her previous order that stayed the proceedings in Milan Fargo's lawsuit against FEMA.

Manglona declined to allow Fargo to file a separate cause of action against FEMA.

The judge also declined to lift the stay currently in effect in Fargo's lawsuit.

Manglona said that, as she previously informed the parties, a stay essentially freezes a case, meaning there should be no activity in the case until the stay is lifted. Therefore, Manglona said, she will not entertain any additional filings by either party, other than a motion to lift the stay, prior to the status conference that is already scheduled for May 28, 2020, at 9:30am.

In February 2019, Fargo filed a *pro se* complaint (filed without a lawyer) against FEMA for allegedly finding him ineligible for some or all of the FEMA funds given him after Super Typhoon Soudelor in 2015 and demanding that he repay the money. In July 2019, Manglona dismissed all claims except one in Fargo's lawsuit. Manglona found that Fargo has stated a claim on which relief may be granted, but only as to FEMA's determination that he was ineligible for disaster assistance after Typhoon Soudelor.

Last March 28, Fargo submitted to the court via email some documents, but no complaint. In her order yesterday, Manglona said it is clear from the documents that Fargo is

requesting that the court open a new civil action against FEMA. Manglona declined to do so. Instead, Manglona said she will docket Fargo's email and attachments as a notice and status report in this case because it does include some updated information that the court relies upon in reaching this decision, namely the Jan. 29, 2020 and Feb. 26, 2020 letter from FEMA to Fargo.

» Fargo advised to file a waiver before FEMA to forgive his \$2,990 debt for humanitarian reasons

The judge noted that the subject matter in Fargo's new filing is the same as that currently before the court in this case: FEMA's

efforts to recoup the financial assistance it provided to Fargo in the aftermath of Super Typhoon Soudelor in 2015. Fargo names the same defendant, FEMA

Manglona reminded Fargo that she has already dismissed with prejudice his claims about FEMA's refusal to provide him medical assistance, FEMA's use of the Aging Center in Saipan, all complaints related to a FEMA email accounts, and denial of assistance relating to Super Typhoon Yutu. A dismissal with prejudice is a final adjudication.

Manglona said that, as she had previously explained, she dismissed those claims with prejudice because they involve discretionary functions over which the government has not waived its sovereign immunity. Manglona said the court has no jurisdiction to hear those claims and, as such, Fargo was instructed not to renew those claims in any amended pleadings.

The judge said Fargo's sole claim against FEMA is his dispute of FEMA's final determination that he is ineligible for disaster assistance after Typhoon Soudelor and his opposition to its efforts to recover the funds paid to him

based on the fact that he never received any notice of its debt recovery letters.

FEMA has filed a motion to dismiss the case. Subsequently, on the parties' joint motion, the court stayed this case last Jan. 16 to allow for FEMA to reinitiate the processing of Fargo's debt. Manglona said it is her understanding that this procedure would allow Fargo to ask that FEMA waive any debt owed.

Manglona said that, having reviewed the document submitted, it appears that FEMA recalled Fargo's debt,

started the processing of the debt anew, and made the final determination that Fargo owes \$2,990 to FEMA for funds it erroneously gave him after Soudelor. At this stage in the procedure, Manglona said, Fargo may now submit a request to FEMA that it waive his debt for humanitarian reasons, including age, health, and inability to pay. The assistant U.S. attorney representing FEMA informed the court and Fargo that the deadline to file his waiver application is April 16, 2020.

While Fargo is not obligated to request a waiver, Man-

glona encourages him to file such a waiver as affording him the opportunity to request that

FEMA forgive his debt for humanitarian reasons, which is why she stayed this matter.



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HAS THE PRESCRIPTION OPIOID CRISIS AFFECTED YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW? YOU COULD BE COMPENSATED FROM THE PURDUE PHARMA L.P. BANKRUPTCY.

FILE YOUR CLAIM BY JUNE 30, 2020.

PLEASE READ THIS NOTICE CAREFULLY. YOUR RIGHTS MAY BE AFFECTED.
PARA INFORMACIÓN EN ESPAÑOL, VISITE EL SITIO WEB.

WHAT IS THIS ABOUT?

If you think you've been hurt by Purdue Pharma L.P., a U.S. limited partnership, its general partner and its subsidiaries, including Imbrium Therapeutics L.P., Adlon Therapeutics L.P., Greenfield BioVentures L.P., Avrio Health L.P., Rhodes Technologies, and Rhodes Pharmaceuticals L.P. ("Purdue"), or Purdue prescription opioids, like OxyContin®, or other prescription opioids produced, marketed or sold by Purdue, you can file a claim for compensation in the Purdue bankruptcy proceeding. The deadline to file a claim is **June 30, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.**

WHAT IS A CLAIM AND WHO CAN FILE?

A "claim" means a right to seek payment or other compensation. You must file a Proof of Claim Form so it is actually received by the deadline. It can be filed by you, by a legal guardian, by survivors, or by relatives of people who have died or are disabled. **All Personal Injury Claimant Proof of Claim Forms and any supporting documentation submitted with those forms will be kept highly confidential and will not be made available to the public.** You do not need an attorney to file a proof of claim for you.

Additionally, partnerships, corporations, joint ventures, trusts, governmental units, and Native American Tribes may also file a proof of claim against Purdue.

Go to **PurduePharmaClaims.com** to find a complete list of instructions on how to file a claim. You will also find a list of the opioids produced, marketed or sold by Purdue.

You may file a Proof of Claim even if a settlement is contemplated in the Purdue bankruptcy so that your claim can be considered as part of any settlement.

WHO DOES THIS AFFECT AND WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?

If you think you've suffered harm from Purdue or its prescription opioids, you have the right to file a claim even if you may also have received reimbursement from insurance. Examples of claims that may be filed in the Purdue bankruptcy include death, addiction or dependence, lost wages, loss of spousal relationship benefit for things like child-rearing, enjoyment of life, etc., or Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (sometimes referred to as "NAS"), among others.

The deadline to file a claim is June 30, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. If you do not file a claim by the deadline, you will lose the right to file a claim against Purdue, and you will lose any right to seek payment or compensation you may have had. Proof of Claim Forms, a list of opioids produced, marketed or sold by "Purdue," and instructions for how to file a claim are online at **PurduePharmaClaims.com**. You can also request a claim form by mail, email or phone:

Purdue Pharma Claims Processing Center c/o Prime Clerk LLC
850 Third Avenue, Ste. 412, Brooklyn, NY 11232

Email: purduepharmainfo@primeclerk.com
Phone: 1.844.217.0912

THIS IS ONLY A SUMMARY OF THE INFORMATION.

Is Purdue out of money? No. For more information concerning Purdue's bankruptcy, Frequently Asked Questions, Proof of Claim Forms, examples of personal injury and other claims that can be filed, instructions on how to file a claim, and important documents including the Bar Date Notice, visit

PurduePharmaClaims.com, or call 1.844.217.0912.



Scan Now

Law Day activities cancelled

Every year, the Judiciary hosts contests to celebrate Law Day. Those include a poster contest capturing the Law Day theme for 3rd to 5th grade students, and an essay contest, often reflecting how the Law Day theme influences the CNMI, for 6th to 8th grade students. Awards are usually given on Law Day, held every year on May 1. The Judiciary, along with the Office of the Governor, the House of Representatives, and the Senate, also hold a proclamation signing ceremony for Law Day, signifying the importance of the rule of law in our island communities.

Due to the pandemic COVID-19, it is with deep regret that the Judiciary must cancel all Law Day activities until next school year. Attorney General Edward P. Manibusan has also canceled the Attorney General's speech competition, which was to be held on May 1. The Judiciary thanks all the students on Rota, Saipan, and Tinian for their submissions this year. Please remain healthy and safe during these difficult times and we hope to see everyone next school year.

For questions, contact Gretchen A. Smith, Esq., Clerk of the Supreme Court, at (670) 236-9715. (PR)

AMERICANS

From Page 1

ris Johnson, was hospitalized, 10 days after testing positive for COVID-19 in what his office described as a “precautionary step.”

Amid the dire news, there were also glimmers of hope some hard-hit areas—the number of people dying appeared to be slowing in New York City, Spain and Italy. The news was cautiously welcomed by leaders, who also noted that any gains could easily be reversed if people did not continue to adhere to strict lockdowns.

U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams offered a stark warning about the expected wave of virus deaths.

“This is going to be our Pearl Harbor moment, our 9/11 moment,” he told “Fox News Sunday.”

But President Donald Trump later suggested the hard weeks ahead could foretell the turning of a corner. “We’re starting to see light at the end of the tunnel,” Trump said at an evening White House briefing.

In New York City, the U.S. epicenter of the pandemic, daily deaths dropped slightly, along with intensive care admissions and the number of patients who needed breathing tubes inserted, but New York state Gov. Andrew Cuomo warned it was “too early to tell” the significance of

those numbers.

Italy and Spain also got some encouraging news. Italy registered its lowest day-to-day increase in deaths in more than two weeks—525, said Angelo Borrelli, the head of the national Civil Protection agency. The pace of infection also seemed to be slowing.

Even so, Borrelli warned, “This good news shouldn’t make us drop our guard.”

Confirmed infections fell in Spain, too, and new deaths declined for the third straight day, dropping to 674—the first time daily deaths have fallen below 800 in the past week.

The outlook, however, was bleak in Britain, which reported more than 600 deaths Sunday, surpassing Italy’s increase. Italy still has, by far, the world’s highest coronavirus death toll—almost 16,000.

In a rare televised address, Queen Elizabeth II appealed to Britons to rise the occasion, while acknowledging enormous disruptions, grief and financial difficulties.

“I hope in the years to come, everyone will be able to take pride in how they responded to this challenge,” she said. “And those who come after us will say that the Britons of this generation were as strong as any.”

Johnson, meanwhile, has been hospitalized, though his office said it was not an emergency and that the 55-year-old Conservative will un-

dergo tests.

There are concerns that Johnson’s government did not take the virus seriously enough at first and that spring weather will tempt Britons and others to break social distancing rules.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said the U.K. might even ban outdoor exercise if people still “flout the rules.”

“The vast majority of people are following the public health advice, which is absolutely critical, and staying at home,” Hancock told Sky TV. “But there are a small minority of people who are still not doing that—it’s quite unbelievable, frankly, to see that.”

As the numbers of infections rose, Saffron Cordery, the deputy head of Britain’s National Health Service Providers, said the agency needed to focus on quickly increasing ventilator capacity and getting more protective equipment for health care workers.

Italians have not been immune to lure of the good weather, either. Top Italian officials took to national television after photos were published showing huge crowds out shopping.

Health Minister Roberto Speranza told RAI state television that all the sacrifices Italians have made since the nationwide lockdown began risked being reversed.

Restrictions on movement vary from country to country, state to state, locality to locality. Swedes have been

advised to practice social distancing, but schools, bars and restaurants remain open. In Germany and Britain, residents can get outdoors to exercise and walk their dogs, while in Serbia and South Africa, dog walking is not allowed.

The ACLU filed its first lawsuit over coronavirus restrictions, argu-

ing in part that Puerto Rico’s curfew leaves people fearing arrest if they help elderly relatives by letting police determine who belongs in a family. A coastal community’s mayor in Georgia fears the governor’s mandate to open beaches will bring crowds to the small island with older residents and no medical facility.

PENSION

From Page 1

for the 25% cover payments due the retirees. That means pension checks will amount to only 75% of their required amounts.

Torres blames the pending cut on the government funds being restricted following the lawsuit filed by the Public School System, which demanded 25% of general funds, as mandated by the CNMI Constitution.

In his letter, the governor stated that he, together with Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, Attorney General Edward Manibusan, Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig, and legislative leaders, did talk with the PSS and the Board of Education about the CNMI’s current financial situation and dire situation of the economy. Torres said he “pleaded with them to help in maximizing what little resources we have available,” explaining that filing an injunction would cause a 25% cut in the retirees’ pension. Despite this, Torres said that Board of Education members Philip Mendiola-Long, Marylou Ada, and Andrew Orsini still went ahead with the lawsuit against the advice of BOE chair Janice Tenorio and vice chair Herman Atalig.

“Because of the lawsuit, my hands are tied and any ability I had to guarantee you your funds has now been stripped away,” Torres said.

Manglona: We cannot blame PSS

That decision to cut government pension is very alarming, according to Sen. Paul A. Manglona (Ind-Rota).

In a letter to the governor yesterday, Manglona said the 25% reduction will impose a financial hardship on the *man’amko* (elderly) who rely solely on retirement checks for a living and to pay for their medical needs.

The legislator urged the government to look at other avenues to meet its constitutional mandate to PSS while ensuring full pension for the *man’amko*. In fact, Manglona said, the Commonwealth has been struggling financially for years now, that the governor himself stated so in a letter in 2018 that the fiscal challenges began in 2017. “Due to the decline in revenue collection and excess expenditures, the Commonwealth had a deficit of \$25,910,717 for the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2018 before [Super] Typhoon Yutu made landfall in the Commonwealth. This is not all. Just a year before, in [fiscal year] 2017, we had an \$8 million deficit; and in [fiscal year] 2019, our deficit grew to a whopping total of \$98 million.”

Manglona stressed that blame cannot be placed on the members of the Board of Education alone for the pension payment cut.

He added that legislative journal records will show that the 25% earmarking requirement for PSS had al-

ways been significantly underfunded during the budget process.

“In fact, several unconstitutional earmarking legislations, such as Public Law 20-34, were intentionally passed to make sure that PSS did not get its required 25% funding. We have always known of PSS’ 25% earmark, so we cannot now pretend that we were blindsided by the Commonwealth Supreme Court’s decision,” he added.

Manglona also highlighted government overspending and deficit accumulation, and further emphasized the need to work with reliable factual information, such as the true cost of government operations, when working on the fiscal year budget plan. “There is no doubt that our practice of omitting or knowingly underbudgeting known, unavoidable costs from the budget—including government utilities, medical referral services, Medicaid matching requirements, CHCC indigent care costs, and PSS’ 25 % earmarking constitutional requirement—has been the main reason for our government’s overspending.”

According to Manglona, based on an independent auditor’s report in August 2019, the Executive Branch exceeded its budgeted allotment by \$11 million in fiscal year 2018, the Medical Referral and Medicaid local expenses exceeded allotments by almost \$20 million, and government utilities by \$1.8 million.

“We cannot attribute our fiscal mismanagement on the retirees, surviving spouses, minor children, or PSS. We have no one to blame but ourselves, the leaders, for the maladministration of public funds,” he added.

Approximately \$11M needed

Considering that the fiscal year is halfway done, Manglona calculated that approximately \$11 million is needed to cover 25% of pensions.

In an attempt to get the financial resources needed to fully fund the retirees’ pension this April 15, Manglona laid out options for Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig to examine. This includes negotiating with the Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC for an advance payment on their Exclusive Casino Annual License Fee of \$15 million due on October 2020, and for the long overdue mandatory Community Benefit Fund contribution in the amount of \$37 million for 2018 and 2019, among other suggested reprogramming actions.

“If after exhausting all efforts at finding additional resources for the retirees’ pension and the Secretary of Finance still comes up short of the approximately \$11 million needed, I strongly recommend that there be a 3- or 4-tier pension rate reduction,” he said. “For instance, the lowest tier may consist of retirees receiving less than \$20,000 per annum getting minimal to no cuts at all to their full benefits.

GAS

From Page 1

at 7am, with prices dropping 20 cents. The last price rollback was on March 27.

Mobil reduced its prices from \$3.639 per gallon of Extra fuel to \$3.439, while their Supreme fuel went down from \$4.089 to 3.889. Diesel also saw a 20-cent decrease from \$4.119 to \$3.919.

Shell gas stations followed suit last Thursday morning, also lowering their prices by 20 cents.

Back in March 27, the CNMI saw it largest rollback in gas prices of the

year with Mobil and Shell lowering their prices by 30 cents.

Mobil lowered their prices first at around 10am. They reduced their prices from \$3.939 per gallon of Extra fuel to \$3.639 per gallon while their Supreme fuel prices dropped from \$4.389 to \$4.089. Diesel also went down 30 cents from \$4.319 to \$4.119.

According to a 54-year-old man, who agreed to be interviewed on the condition of anonymity, the price rollback is not only good news but is actually necessary during this pandemic.

“Gas prices in the United States is like less than \$2 now due to this CO-

VID-19. The last thing people need to worry about is paying for gas or buying food. We need to save our money to prepare for the worst,” he said.

In related news, due to the continuous drop in fuel prices, the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has decreased its fuel adjustment charge. Effective last April 1, CUC’s FAC was decreased \$0.11885 per kWh. As a result, individuals who normally use 500 kWh of power per month will pay approximately \$23.75 less in their monthly billing.

Although the FAC rate has been decreased, CUC is still encouraging its consumers to practice energy conservation.

the 10 pending specimen that were sent out recently.

The CNMI saw its first COVID-19-related death last March 30, with a 70-year-old man in quarantine who died before his test results came back positive for coronavirus. Bautista has confirmed that the male individual is officially the first COVID-19-related death in the CNMI.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, the CNMI saw its first two positive cases last March 27, four confirmed positive COVID-19 cases last April 2, and two more positive cases last April 3, for a total of eight confirmed positive cases in the CNMI as of April 6.

Out of eight, four are female individuals, four are male individuals, including the man who died.

As of April 2, the CNMI has submitted a total of 33 specimens for COVID-19 testing at the Guam Public Health Laboratory. Out of the 33 specimens, 23 have been processed, giving the CNMI a result of eight positive cases and 15 negative cases.

COVID-19 in Guam

Guam’s Department of Public Health

and Social Service tested 38 individuals for COVID-19 last April 5. Of those 38, 17 tested positive through Guam’s DPHSS and 21 tested negative.

According to the *Guam Daily Post*, Guam also saw its first infant patient, a 1-year-old child who tested positive for COVID-19 among the island’s 110 confirmed positive cases.

There are five other children who have also tested positive, ranging in ages from 10 to 19, according to Linda Unpingco Denorcey, DPHSS director. She also stated that the 1-year-old was infected due to household contact, but did not provide information if the children are within the same family.

As of April 6 out of the 110 positive cases in Guam, 25 people have recovered from COVID-19.

According to the *Guam Daily Post*, Guam’s Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero said, “No governor in this country knows how long this crisis will last, but I know that Guam has outlasted every crisis for thousands of years. That is just who we are—and that won’t change because of COVID-19.”

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From Page 1

are still advised to follow precautionary measures as they re-enter the community, such as staying home, social distancing in public places, and avoiding unnecessary travel except for grocery shopping and picking up food, medicine, and essential supplies.

According to the Governor’s COVID-19 Task Force chair Warren Villagomez, two more individuals who went under the mandatory 14-day quarantine two weeks ago are being released today, April 7, from the Pacific Island Clubs in San Antonio.

As of yesterday, Villagomez confirmed that 23 individuals were released last April 6, making a total of 25 having been released as of today.

Following the eight positive COVID-19 cases last April 2, Bautista confirmed that, as of April 6, at 4pm, there are currently no new “persons under investigation” in the CNMI.

Bautista also confirmed that CHCC is still awaiting the results of

Congress urges Trump to mobilize military for COVID-19 efforts

By IVA MAURIN

iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Delegate Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (Ind-MP) has joined 56 bipartisan members of U.S. Congress to urge U.S. President Donald J. Trump to mobilize the U.S. Department of Defense to be the “backbone” of federal logistical efforts, particularly in providing relief, in the country’s fight against COVID-19.

“The U.S. military has sophisticated logistical expertise

that can effectively transport and coordinate supplies on a global scale. We should leverage our military’s unique capabilities to help America fight the coronavirus,” Sablan stated.

In a letter to Trump, the legislators urged the President to direct the Defense Department, with the belief that the armed forces can provide resource expertise, and the organization at scale to provide much-needed relief all over the United States,

According to Sablan, they

specifically asked the President to provide U.S. military airlift capabilities to help resolve supply chain shortfalls, deploy the Defense Logistics Agency to coordinate supply distribution, and mobilize military health care personnel to fill gaps, especially for urgent services like testing.

The members of Congress cited the military’s history in providing rapid air cargo operations, such as during the 2014 Ebola outbreak, and its “significant airlift capacity,

especially with the C-5s and C-17s” operated by the Air Force, as a push for the military to implement a Coronavirus Airlift.

The legislators, in asking Trump to deploy the Defense Logistics Agency, stated that the DLA is uniquely organized to effectively and efficiently handle logistical missions nationally and globally.

“During the Ebola outbreak, DLA leveraged the distribution centers it operates around the world, as well as the re-

gional relationships it has developed, to bring supplies into areas of high need. This kind of coordination is in dire need here at home,” the lawmakers’ letter said.

They also asked the President to mobilize military health care personnel to help the public health agencies’ effort to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Last Saturday, critical medical supplies and equipment were shipped by the Department of Defense, with the

Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, via the US Air Force C17 Globemaster aircraft, primarily at the request of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres.

Included in the governor’s request were a makeshift hospital with beds, medical equipment and capabilities, lab testing capabilities with BioFire Test Kits, and airlifts to bring in Viral Transport Media and other medical supplies and equipment.

BEH establishment ratings in February

In February 2020, the Commonwealth Health Care Corp.’s Bureau of Environmental Health conducted sanitary inspections on retail, eating, and drinking establishments. Through this release, we are providing the names of establishments by inspection grade, and the names of establishments that were ordered to close for serious violations of health and sanitation standards. For these establishments, we provide the suspension date and the date they were certified to resume operations.

Food Safety Rating classifications are based on a score of 0-100.

- 90-100: Grade A
- 80-89: Grade B
- 70-79: Grade C
- >69: Closure/Suspension

SAIPAN Grade A

1. LF Market, Chalan Kanoa
2. Tian Market, Chalan Kanoa
3. SPE Wholesale, Chalan Kiya
4. Garapan Restaurant, Garapan
5. J’s Restaurant, Gualo Rai
6. Joeten Superstore, San Jose
7. YZL Retail, San Antonio
8. Shunfu Market, Gualo Rai
9. New L&Q Market, Garapan
10. H-Mart, Wholesale, San Antonio
11. Ming Yang Market & Butcher, San Vicente
12. Lucky De Mart & Butcher, Dan Dan
13. New 7 Star Market, Dan Dan
14. Bostonian Bakery, Chalan Lau Lau
15. Caravan’s Restaurant, Gualo Rai
16. Apex Wholesale, San Antonio
17. New CK Market, Chalan Kanoa
18. Roberto Café, Gualo Rai
19. Saipan Store, Garapan
20. Kensington Hotel, Infinity Bar, San Roque
21. Twin’s Supermarket, Lower Navy Hill
22. Twin’s Supermarket, Dan Dan
23. The Shack, San Jose
24. Hyatt Regency Hotel, Garapan (inclusive of 13 establishments)

- Skipper’s Bar
- Cafeteria
- Bakery
- Main Kitchen
- Giovanni’s
- Lobby’s Bar
- Kili Café
- DJ’s Corner
- Regency Club Lounge
- Splash Pool Bar
- Miyako
- Teppanyaki
- Regency Ball Room

25. Shinsen Restaurant, Garapan
26. Islander Mini Mart, San Antonio
27. Summer Snow, Susupe
28. Jin Li Market, Dan Dan
29. Guang Zhou Restaurant, Garapan
30. KS Market, Garapan
31. 999 Market, Chalan Piao
32. Tenda Supermarket, Koblerville
33. Asin Fish Mart, San Vicente
34. Han Nam Supermarket, Koblerville
35. Saipan Beach Restaurant, Chalan Kanoa
36. Toha Market and Butcher, San Antonio
37. New Shin Restaurant, Garapan
38. Lucky R Catering and Bakery, Chalan Kiya
39. Himawari Restaurant, Garapan
40. Korea House Restaurant, Susupe
41. Free Town Wholesale, San Antonio
42. I-Mart Retail, Tanapag

ROTA Grade A

1. Rota Resort, As Puladan (inclusive of two establishments)
- Pacifica Restaurant
- Pacifica Bar
2. TJ Bake Shop, Sinapalo Village
3. TJ Enterprises, Pacific Hot Pepper, Sinapalo Village
4. Calvo Ent. Inc. Mobile Mart, Songsong Village
5. Harvest Mart, Songsong Village
6. TJ Ent. Anne’s Convenient Store, Songsong
7. 3King’s Market, Sinapalo Village
8. Sunshine Variety Shop, Sinapalo Village
9. Sinapalo Safeway, Sinapalo Village
10. Kalayaan Inc. Catering Services, Songsong Village

11. Ace Hardware Retail, Songsong

SAIPAN Grade B

1. Mura Ichiban, Garapan
2. Eden Restaurant, Garapan
3. Tony Dumpling, San Antonio
4. Boo Ga Food Catering, Chalan Kanoa
5. Marg’s Kitchen & Bakery, Susupe
6. Good Day Restaurant, Susupe
7. New Top Store, Dan Dan
8. Sunny’s Café, San Antonio

ROTA Grade B

1. Uno Sais Ocho Café, Sinapalo Village
2. Uno Sais Ocho Bakery, Sinapalo Village
3. 3Kings TOO!, Sinapalo Village

Grade C: 0

Establishment(s) ordered CLOSED for serious violations of health and sanitation standards: 0

For more information, contact the BEH at (670) 664-4870/72/73, or email the director of the BEH, John Tagabuel, at john.tagabuel@dph.gov.mp. (PR)

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PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP20-CHCC/FACILITIES-002

NEW SUBMISSION DEADLINE: APRIL 29, 2020 TIME: 10:00 AM

“SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, TESTING & COMMISSIONING OF A 25-TON AIR-CONDITIONING IN THE OXYGEN GENERATING ROOM”

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)/INVITATION TO BID (ITB) FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE (WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP). ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO RFP’S TAB ON THE BOTTOM NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP/ITB. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

*MANDATORY ASSESSMENT ON APRIL 8, 2020

@ 9:00 A.M. SAIPAN TIME @ THE CHCC FACILITY/MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORAZON P. ADA
CHCC DIRECTOR OF P&S



A shipment of medical Personal Protective Equipment is received from the Strategic National Stockpile to be sorted and distributed throughout Hawaii, the CNMI, Guam, and American Samoa. FEMA works with the state of Hawaii, CNMI, Guam, and American Samoa to distribute PPE to areas battling care for coronavirus patients.

GRACE SIMONEAU/FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

CUC-IFB-19-036, REV. 1

MANNED SECURITY and ELECTRONIC MONITORING SERVICES

The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), Office of the Executive Director is soliciting competitive bids from qualified firms to provide Manned Security and Electronic Monitoring Services for various sites at CUC, Saipan and Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of **\$100.00** (non-refundable) for one IFB package set. If you have previously purchased CUC-IFB-19-036, no purchase is needed but will still have to register in order to receive the package.

Contractors must provide proof of “Indemnity Liability Insurance,” specifically covering security workers assigned to CUC’s compound. Coverage must be a minimum of \$200,000.00. The Contractor shall agree to and indemnify and hold CUC harmless from and against all liability, loss, damage or injury, and all cost and expenses (including attorneys’ fees and costs of any suit related thereto) suffered or incurred by the Cooperative, arising from or related to Contractor’s negligent performance under the contract.

Proponents shall provide a certification signed by a principal of the company stating that the company is currently in full compliance with all applicable CNMI and Federal Labor Laws and has been for the past Five (5) years. Proponents shall submit a listing of all of its employees (US & Foreign) with corresponding job titles and a certification of good standing from the CNMI Department of Labor. Failure of the company to provide the certification is grounds to reject the entire Bid.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked “CUC-IFB-19-036-Rev.1, Security Guard Services”, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST, Saipan Time) on April 14, 2020.** Late submissions of Bids will not be considered.

This Invitation for bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of Bid in anticipation of a contract. This request and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations. The contractor shall be required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. All responses to this Invitation for bids should take into account any and all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the obligation of the Proponent, awarded a contract.

All Proponents are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Proponents due to lack of information or understanding of the Bid requirements in the course of Contractor’s preparation of a Bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST, Saipan Time) on March 25, 2020** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to John Mafnas, CUC Contracting Specialist via email address john.mafnas@cucgov.org and Christie Sablan, CUC P&S, Purchasing Technician, Senior – christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in the said bids, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids submitted shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

PSS awarded \$2.7M for Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems

The CNMI Public School System has been awarded a highly competitive grant by the Institution of Education Sciences and the U.S. Department of Education to establish a State-Wide Longitudinal Data System, or SLDS. The grant award for the four-year period is \$2,561,497.

The PSS project, "Advance CNMI: Leveraging Data Power for Greater Success," will be implemented in phases to set the foundation for a sophisticated information system that drives data usage to support decision-making at multiple levels from classroom

instruction to district policies.

The two primary goals of the project are to establish an infrastructure by connecting K-12 Longitudinal Data Systems with Head Start and Early Head Start SLDS and to shift the use of data from compliance to accountability and strategic instructional usage. Achieving these two objectives will take four years, beginning this year and run through 2024. The long-term goal is to establish an SLDS infrastructure for the CNMI and to move the use of data beyond the isolated reporting for compliance to an integrat-

ed system driven by accountability and focused on enhancing student learning.

The first year will focus on hiring the key personnel and establishing the SLDS infrastructure. Years 2 through 4 will concentrate on creating the data architecture and system design, establishing a stakeholder engagement plan, sustainability plan, and training. After Year 4, efforts will focus on linking the data systems with our postsecondary institutions; Northern Marianas College and NMI Trades Institute, and our workforce departments' Department

of Labor, Public Health, the Workforce Investment Agency, etc. This will allow the CNMI to use integrated data to make data-informed decisions for future research and planning.

The SLDS will be a central hub of student data where research-based queries can be made by stakeholders to draw out quantitative insights that can be used to tailor instructional approaches, inform community partners about at-risk populations, guide leaders in the creation of policies, and ultimately narrow achievement gaps to

lead to student success.

The grant was written in collaboration and leadership of Lynette Villagomez, associate commissioner for Accountability, Research and Evaluation; Annette Pladevega, coordinator of Research and Evaluation program co-

ordinator; Ruth Calvo, manager of Records and Data; and Dr. Bobby Cruz, director of Instructional Technology & Distance Education director. It will be managed under the Department of Accountability, Research and Evaluation. (PR)



MEDICAL SUPPLIES

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres poses with the crew of the U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster aircraft at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport last Saturday, April 4. The plane and its crew delivered critical medical supplies and equipment, as well as a 50-bed federal medical station from the Strategic National Stockpile to Saipan. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Critical medical supplies and equipment, as well as a 50-bed federal medical station from the Strategic National Stockpile, are unloaded from the U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster aircraft that delivered the items last April 4 at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

DETF arrests suspected 'ice' trafficker

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Drug Enforcement Task Force arrested last week a 44-year-old man for allegedly trafficking methamphetamine or "ice" on Saipan.

Juan Sablan Ada Jr. was taken Friday, his birthday, before Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Cama-

cho for a bail hearing in the Supreme Court courtroom. Camacho set Ada's bail at \$100,000 cash and set the preliminary hearing for April 13 at 2:30pm.

The court will appoint a private counsel for Ada after assistant attorney general Chester Hinds informed the court that the Office of the Public Defender cannot represent

the defendant due to conflict. The OPD is apparently representing another defendant involved in the investigation in this case.

According to DETF officer Maynard Reyes in his report, they met with a cooperating defendant last Dec. 2 to arrange a "controlled buy-walk" operation against Ada. On the same day, the cooperating de-

fendant managed to buy \$450 worth of methamphetamine from Ada at the latter's house in Koblerville, Reyes said.

At the hearing, only six people, including *Saipan Tribune*, were allowed in the courtroom as the CNMI Judiciary has been implementing strict policy due to the coronavirus pandemic. Ada and his lawyer were placed in a separate room right before the courtroom's main door.

THINGS TO KNOW

As of April 6, 2020. All information may change without prior notice. For corrections and additions to this list, send an email to editor@saipantribune.com or call 235-6397 or 235-2440.

POLICIES

- All public beaches and pathways are open from 6am to 6pm for exercise and shoreline subsistence fishing. Individuals must practice social distancing while exercising and fishing.
- Curfew from 7pm to 6am for everyone (adults and minors)
- All boat ramps and docks are now open again. Boaters must cease all fishing activities and dock their vessels before the 7pm curfew.
- President Donald J. Trump has approved a major disaster declaration for the CNMI.
- All deliveries and shipping services are on schedule.

RESOURCES

- Update on Commonwealth Health Care Corp. services. See link on website.
- Frequently-asked-questions about direct assistance under CARES Act. See link on website.
- Face masks and do-it-yourself facial coverings. See link on website.
- Needing mental health tips? See link on website.
- Announcement about re-opening of boat ramps and docks. See link on website.
- Announcement about re-opening of public beaches and pathways. See link on website.
- Avoid COVID-19 scams: Attorney General Edward Manibusan issues alert of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) scams. See link on website.

Settlement Fund office hours

Beginning yesterday, April 6, 2020, the Settlement Fund office has reduced its service hours to half day. We are still restricting access to the public and will continue to receive and respond to inquiries by phone, fax and email *only* from 8am to 1pm, Monday – Friday. This schedule will be in effect until further notice. Fund staff will be available to assist members only by telephone, fax, or email.

Contact Information for the Settlement Fund: tel: (670) 322-3863; fax: (670) 664-8080; email: info@nmisf.com. (PR)

Source: Compiled by Saipan Tribune

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

April 07, 2000

Ex-CPA officials allegedly padded leave credits

The previous administration of the Commonwealth Ports Authority is facing investigation by the Office of the Public Auditor for allegedly circumventing the NMI Retirement Fund Act to increase the retirement benefits of two former officials. A preliminary result of the OPA investigation disclosed that the previous CPA administration allowed the conversion of the officials' unused compensatory time hours to sick leave for use as additional years of credited service in the computation of their retirement allotment. The ports authority also paid the

former officials' unused leave and salaries in advance to increase the average annual salaries used in the computation of their retirement apportionment, according to the public auditor's report.

Senate realigns \$4M for CUC to govt agencies

The Senate yesterday agreed to wipe off all the \$4 million set aside by Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio for payment of government utilities in order to hike the budget of some agencies, including the island municipalities of Rota and Tinian, under the proposed FY 2000 spending package. The budget bill finally cleared the upper house during a late afternoon session that was cut short from

time to time as members went back to amend the measure passed by the House of Representatives last month. It appropriates the \$211.1 million projected revenues for the current fiscal year to all departments and agencies, including the \$4.2 million income from land leases earmarked strictly for use by the Division of Public Lands.

April 07, 2005

Anatahan off limits

The Emergency Management Office has declared Anatahan Island temporarily off limits until further notice. The EMO said, though, that the volcano is not currently dangerous to most aircraft within the CNMI's airspace. However, conditions may change instantly. "An aircraft should pass upwind of Anatahan or beyond 30 km downwind from the island and exercise due caution within 10 km of Anatahan," said the agency.

The EMO is also reminding mariners to avoid the Anatahan area due to continuous volcanic activity.

NMC willing to work on refining licensing regs

The Northern Marianas College board of regents has expressed willingness to work with the Attorney General's Office in refining the proposed licensing regulations for postsecondary schools, which the AGO had described as broad and counterproductive, among other things. NMC chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds said yesterday that the regents have tasked their legal counsel, Jesus C. Borja, to draft the board's official response to assistant attorney general Alan J. Barak's memorandum regarding the proposed regulations. "[The memorandum] was a little disconcerting because [the AGO] used a couple of languages calling our policy arbitrary and capricious. But

we are a very gracious board in terms of accepting constructive criticism or feedback," King-Hinds said.

April 07, 2006

Rota student Atalig honored with membership

The National Society of High School Scholars recently announced that Rota High School student Charlie Ogo Atalig has been selected for membership in the society. The group recognizes top scholars in the nation and invites only those students who have achieved superior academic excellence. The announcement was made by NSHSS founder and chair, Clacs Nobel, a senior member of the Nobel Prize family. "On behalf of NSHSS, I am honored to recognize the hard work, sacrifice, and commitment that Charlie has demonstrated to achieve this exceptional level of academic excellence," said Nobel.

Camacho makes cut on National Honor Roll

Sixteen-year-old Vince Lui Duenas Camacho has made it to the roster of academic achievers in the high-powered list of the National Honor Roll, Awards for Academic Achievement. A high school junior at the John McEacheran High School in Georgia, the grandchild of Ben and Annie Duenas of the CNMI has been selected for induction into the 2005/2006 National Honor Roll for outstanding academic achievement. The 2005/2006 National Honor Roll will include Camacho's name and biography as one of America's leading high school students. National Honor Roll Student Nomination Committee chair Lynn Romeo said once inducted, Camacho would have an opportunity to showcase his accomplishments in academics, clubs and activities, sports, volunteer efforts, and community service among others.

Esper defends firing of Navy ship captain over virus warning

By HOPE YEN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP)—With the military under broad pressure to step up its coronavirus response, Defense Secretary Mark Esper on Sunday defended the firing of an aircraft carrier commander who sought help for sailors during an outbreak as a matter of holding leaders “accountable.” He also said the matter was under review.

In two television interviews, Esper said acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly made a “very tough decision” last Thursday to oust Capt. Brett Crozier of command of the USS *Theodore Roosevelt*, which was docked in Guam, and that he supported the decision.

“It was based on his view that he had lost faith and confidence in the captain, based on his actions. It was supported by Navy leadership,” Esper said.

Still, the Pentagon chief declined to explicitly say he agreed with Modly’s assessment, noting that there is “an

investigation ongoing.”

“This could ultimately come to my desk,” he said. “I think Secretary Modly laid out very reasonably, very deliberately the reasons why. And I think, when all those facts come to bear, we will have a chance to understand why Secretary Modly did what he did.”

Crozier circulated a memo to Navy leaders last week that was obtained by news media in which he urged speedy action to evacuate the ship of nearly 5,000 sailors as the coronavirus began to escalate. Modly said Crozier “demonstrated extremely poor judgment” in the middle of a crisis, although Navy officials later announced they would offload 2,700 sailors in the coming days.

Videos went viral on social media over the weekend, showing hundreds of sailors gathered on the ship chanting and applauding Crozier on Thursday as he walked off the vessel, turned, saluted, waved and got into a waiting car.

His firing comes amid pressure on the military as it seeks to step up its response to the

coronavirus outbreak, including sending two Navy hospital ships to assist New York and Los Angeles. On Sunday, Esper said the Pentagon was sending over 1,100 additional doctors, nurses and other medical staff to New York as part of a COVID-19 operation that would have the military in charge of “the largest hospital in the United States,” with 2,500 beds at the city’s Jacob Javits Convention Center.

Esper issued new requirements for those visiting or working on Department of Defense installations regarding the use of cloth face coverings. He said that “to the extent practical,” all individuals on department property “will wear” the coverings when they cannot maintain six feet of social distance from others. The guidance, outlined in a memo to senior military leaders Sunday, is effective immediately.



Esper

As the coronavirus pandemic worsens and the country turns increasingly to the military for help, America’s armed services have been struggling to get new recruits as families and communities hunker down. The services, as a result, could fall thousands short of their enlistment goals if the widespread lockdowns drag on, forcing them to pressure current troops to stay on in order to maintain broader military readiness.

Asked over the weekend about whether Crozier’s firing could hurt morale in the military, President Donald Trump said he was not involved with the decision but agreed with it “100 percent.”

“I thought it was terrible what he did to write a letter,” he told reporters Saturday. “I mean, this isn’t a class on literature. This is a captain of a massive ship that’s nuclear powered. And he shouldn’t

be talking that way in a letter. He could call and ask and suggest.”

Esper insisted it was not unusual for the Navy to relieve commanders so quickly without first completing a review into their actions. But he also declined to say what will happen to Crozier, citing the current ongoing investigation. Esper said he backed Modly’s decision after also receiving advice from the chief of naval operations and Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

“It’s just another example of how we hold leaders accountable for their actions,” Esper said.

He said over half of the ship had now been tested. About 155 sailors had tested positive for COVID-19, exhibiting “mild and moderate” symptoms with “no hospitalizations whatsoever.”

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For

some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia, and death.

Esper said not all the sailors will be evacuated because the ship has sensitive equipment and weapons on board, and a new commander will be arriving there soon to assess the crew’s safety.

The ouster has drawn fire from different quarters, including former military commanders.

On Sunday, Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden called the Trump administration’s handling of the case as “close to criminal.”

“The idea that this man stood up and said what had to be said, got it out that his troops, his Navy personnel were in danger,” he said. “I think he should have a commendation rather than be fired.”

Tweed Roosevelt, the great grandson of former President Theodore Roosevelt, called Crozier a “hero.”

Face coverings required at NBG facilities

SANTA RITA, Guam—Effective immediately, all individuals on U.S. Naval Base Guam property, installations, and facilities are required to wear cloth face coverings in public settings. The measures are set forth by the Department of Defense and are in line with the continued implementation of protective measures to mitigate the spread of coronavirus disease, COVID-19.

Face coverings are required at all times while inside NEX Guam and Orote Commissary facilities. Those who are not wearing a face covering will not be allowed entry into these facilities or any NBG facilities.

All individuals should be prepared to lower the face covering when directed by security forces to verify identification.

Face coverings must be conservative in appearance, not offensive, and conform to

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines:

Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face, from nose to chin; full face coverings and ski masks are not authorized

Must be secured with ties or ear loops, preferably with multiple layers of fabric, and material is cloth

Does not restrict breathing

Until official uniform face coverings are produced and implemented, personnel are authorized to wear medical or construction type masks, or other cloth coverings such as bandanas, scarves, etc.

As an interim measure and due to the worldwide shortage on masks, individuals are encouraged to make face coverings from household items or common materials, such as clean T-shirts or other clean cloths that can cover the nose and mouth. (PR)

CHC Cancer Center moves to new area

The Commonwealth Health Care Corp. advises the public that the Commonwealth Health Center Cancer Center is now located in the outpatient services area, between the Dialysis Center and the outpatient clinics. Patients should enter at the Dialysis Center door and follow the signs to the new location.

Make an appointment

Usually your primary care physician or surgeon will refer you to the Cancer Cen-

ter, and we will call you to schedule an appointment. If you have cancer and do not have a regular physician, call (670) 234-8950 and ask for the Oncology Unit; we will obtain your records and schedule an appointment for you.

For more information about CHCC programs, follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter at @cnmicccc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950. (PR)

7th Fleet commander arrives in Guam

APRA HARBOR, Guam—The commander of U.S. 7th Fleet visited USS *Theodore Roosevelt* leadership in port at Naval Base Guam while the aircraft carrier undergoes its COVID-19 recovery efforts on April 5.

Vice Adm. Bill Merz, commander, U.S. 7th Fleet, arrived in Guam to support the ongoing recovery effort on the Nimitz-class carrier, and he met with the crew and area leadership.

“The team in Guam has shown enormous spirit and focus getting this ship healthy again. Know that every day, regardless of what the challenge may be, my No. 1 priority is to sustain the warfighting posture of 7th Fleet, and the most important element of this number one priority is the sailors,” said Merz. “We simply cannot execute the mission of defending our interests, our friends, and our allies without the fighting spirit of the immensely capable men and women of this team. It takes a lot of cooperation and coordination, and although we have a lot of work to do I want to make sure those involved are getting our support and gratitude. The families of our sailors should be proud of the ongoing efforts and know that we’re going to take care of our people.”

Merz visited locations on Naval Base Guam, discussing logistics and the ship recovery process with counterparts from Joint Region Marianas, Carrier Strike Group Nine, and the Naval Base Guam



U.S. Navy Vice Adm. Bill Merz, commander, U.S. 7th fleet, addresses Carrier Strike Group Nine warfare commanders on the pier in Naval Base Guam on April 5, 2020. Merz arrived in Guam to assess and support the ongoing COVID-19 recovery efforts for the crew of *Theodore Roosevelt*. *Theodore Roosevelt* is in Guam for a scheduled port visit for resupply and crew rest during their scheduled deployment to the Indo-Pacific.

U.S. NAVY/MCS SEAMAN KAYLIANNA GENIER

commanding officer.

The ship arrived in Guam on March 27 for a scheduled port visit. Prior to the port visit three sailors tested positive for COVID-19 aboard USS *Theodore Roosevelt*. The Navy has undertaken an aggressive mitigation plan that is currently isolating, quarantining, and treating affected sailors to keep the ship prepared to execute its mission.

The Navy is working closely with the government of Guam and Joint Region Marianas to follow U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines to move sailors safely off ship while continuing to maintain the vessel’s readiness to operate at sea.

“Theodore Roosevelt Strike Group is extremely thankful for the overwhelming support

from the government of Guam and Naval Base Guam in the fight against COVID-19,” said Rear Adm. Stu Baker, commander, Carrier Strike Group Nine. “Even with such short notice, they were able to assist getting our sailors moved off ship in a short period of time. Their support has been critical to our ability to remain mission ready.”

Sailors from *Theodore Roosevelt* will be using various hotels across the island, allowing them to align with the recommended 14-day quarantine period while also maintaining an all-hands effort aboard to sanitize the ship. The all-hands effort though does not rest solely with the *Roosevelt*, but with all who are helping its sailors get well and back to sea.

“The Joint Region Marianas

and Naval Base Guam teams have moved mountains to help our TR shipmates get healthy and back out to sea,” said Rear Adm. John Menoni, commander, Joint Region Marianas. “I can’t say enough how proud I am of everyone’s hard work during this very dynamic situation. Our partners in the government and the people of Guam have helped us from day one and we are thankful for their assistance helping the TR Team be ready to fight.”

U.S. 7th Fleet provides security alongside allies and partners throughout a free and open Indo-Pacific. As the U.S. Navy’s largest forward-deployed fleet, 7th Fleet operates roughly 50-70 ships and submarines and 140 aircraft with approximately 20,000 sailors. (PR)

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

School shutdowns threaten to worsen the achievement gap

The COVID-19 crisis threatens to undo years of educational efforts to help disadvantaged students catch up to their more affluent classmates. The same old problems—lack of internet access or computers for doing homework, parents who have limited financial or educational resources to help their children with school—are exacerbated now that students are required to learn not in a classroom, but remotely.

No matter how engaging a teacher makes a video lesson, it can't accomplish a thing if students don't see it. That's why, come the fall, these gaps will almost certainly be wider than they've been in years.

Worse, not all schools are even making an effort to assure educational "equity" during this period. A recent survey of dozens of large school districts nationwide by the nonprofit Center for Reinventing Public Education found that only a third are working on getting internet-connected devices to those who lack them. Only half are involved in actual lesson planning; the others are instead referring students to optional assignments or pointing them to publicly available educational sites such as the Khan Academy.

In their defense, schools were as blindsided as anyone by how swiftly and completely the pandemic disrupted routines. For years now, they have been kept from giving students access to broadband by the federal government's overly restrictive E-Rate program, which provides WiFi hot spots to schools at a deep discount but makes it difficult to loan those to students for use at home.

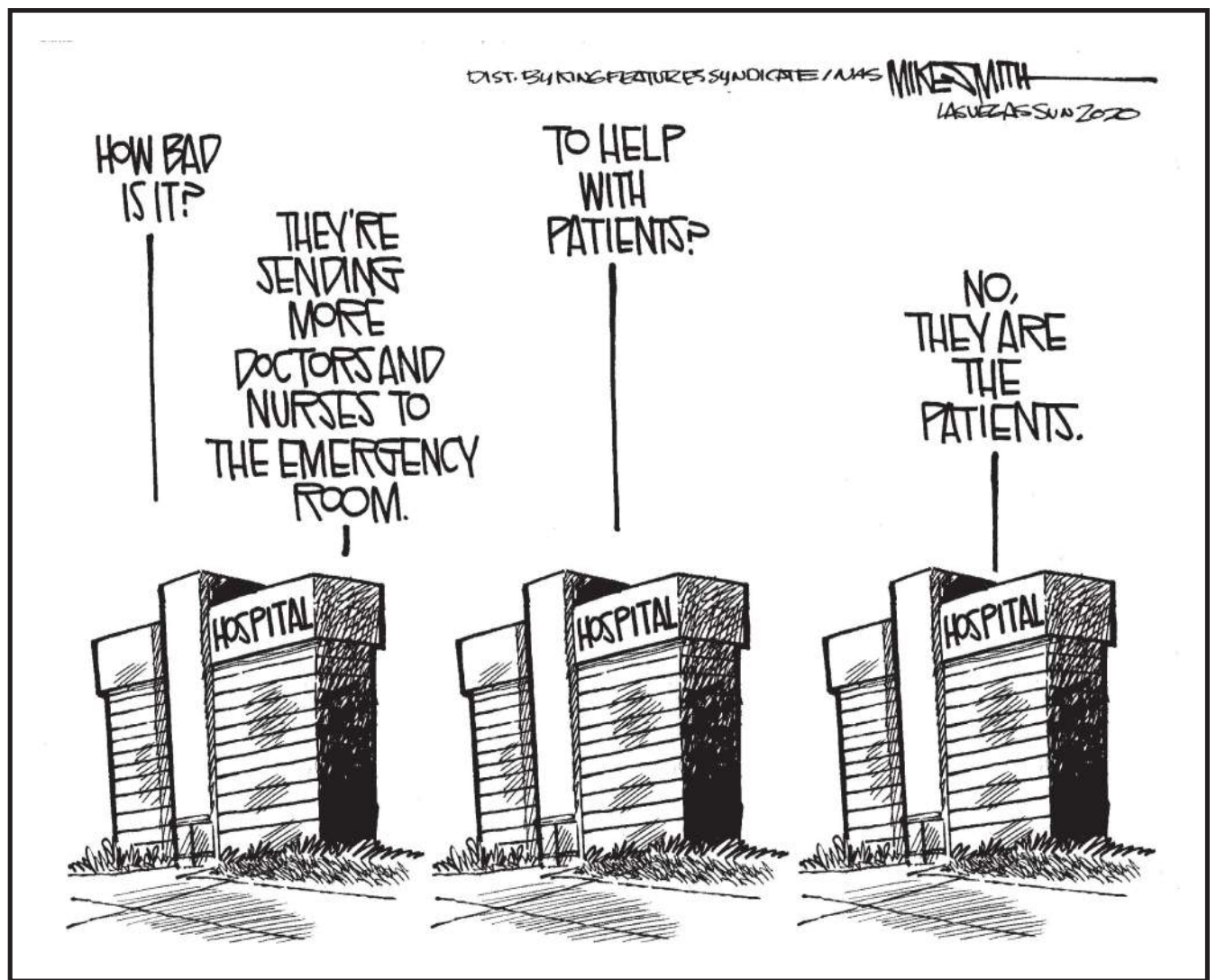
And to their credit, most schools' first effort has been on safeguarding health. They have been feeding students and often their families who otherwise might have bare pantries, largely through "grab and go" meals. They have informed families about the virus and the best steps for reducing its spread.

Still, the educational efforts by schools nationwide are far too spotty. Many aren't attempting to provide any real lessons at all, especially after U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos sent out word that schools would still have to meet the needs of special education students. Concerned that they would be sued if they provided any education to abled students that was not also available to disabled students, they simply decided not to educate at all.

That's unacceptable, and DeVos, who has not shown herself a leader during this time of crisis, needs to make clear to schools exactly what does and what doesn't constitute inclusive education, and to offer reasonable flexibility. Beyond that, she should insist that schools provide evidence that they are gearing up to offer meaningful education to their students, and push for E-Rate funding that will expand access to wireless hot spots to students' homes.

Today's students shouldn't become the lost cohort, left with less ability to succeed academically than those who came before or after them. Above all, it would be grossly unfair to allow disadvantaged students to languish during a long gap in schooling while students whose families have more resources forge ahead.

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Close ports of entry

By ISHMAEL TOGAMAE, MD, SHELDON RIKLON, MD, KAMAL GU-
NAWARDANE, MD, and SEIJI YAMADA, MD, MPH
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Author's Note: Here we use the name of the virus, "SARS-CoV-2," instead of saying "COVID-19," the name of the disease involving fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

An emergency doctor met with the governor's Cabinet of a Pacific Island jurisdiction to present about the coronavirus pandemic. He noted that there is only one ventilator for the entire country. The doctor asked the parliamentarians whom among them they would choose to be on the ventilator in the event that the coronavirus reaches their islands. The Cabinet members, many of whom have diabetes and hypertension, were all silent. A few days later the head of state declared a state of emergency. All ports of entry, particularly the airports, are now closed.

SARS-CoV-2 is very contagious. Because it has to come from somewhere, the first people on-island to become infected have some connection to travel. They're visitors. Or they're locals who went somewhere else. Or they're locals who had close contact with visitors. A single case, though, of a person with no connection to travel represents many more people with SARS-CoV-2. A single case represents widespread community transmission.

SARS-CoV-2 is very wily. Some patients will die. Some will feel completely well but can spread it to others. All 3,300 people in the small northern Italian town of Vo Euganeo were tested. Only 3% were positive, but of that 3%, half had no symptoms at all. Of the 531 infected individuals evacuated from the *Diamond Princess* cruise ship, 255 (48%) were asymptomatic at the time of specimen collection. Of 12 Japanese nationals evacuated from Wuhan who tested positive, five (42%) had no symptoms. Among those that get sick with COVID-19 disease, the infected person is contagious for two days before the onset of symptoms, and transmissibility peaks before or with the onset of symptoms. Some 44% of transmission occurs before the infected person develops symptoms.

Some might say, "It doesn't matter if we don't identify the minimally symptomatic people, because everybody who is sick is supposed to be isolating." This doesn't take into account the need for people to make a living. That person with minor symptoms is going to keep serving at the restaurant, cashing in at the

store, or working at the hospital. The public health authorities need to know about every single person infected with SARS-CoV-2.

The point of the two-week quarantine is that those who are going to be sick will get sick within two weeks. If everybody perfectly socially distanced from everybody else for two weeks, no new people would get infected. But obviously, social distancing isn't going to be perfect, because we Pacific Islanders have collectivist cultures that engage in most daily activities as a group, a family, a community. So we then have to lock down for another two weeks, and then another two weeks.

So we need to know who in particular (i.e., the individual infected with SARS-CoV-2) needs to stay away from everybody else. We can identify those individuals only by testing.

Maybe your remote Pacific Island jurisdiction hasn't had SARS-CoV-2 introduced yet. In this day and age, perhaps that's not likely. But if you don't get too many visitors from outside, maybe you're lucky. If your people are still able to live off of the land and aren't completely dependent on canned food and toilet paper—last month was the time to close the ports of entry, the seaports, but especially the airports. The Marshall Islands shut them down on March 8; Pohnpei shut them down on March 21; Chuuk shut them down on March 29. The Marshall Islands are following every precaution, including putting 19 Marshallese students returning from Chuuk under a mandatory 14-day quarantine, to keep SARS-CoV-2 out of the country. Just lock it down now; the tighter the better. Congratulations to those who already bravely and decisively took that step. You are making history in an exemplary manner at this critical time for the whole world.

If your economy was dependent on tourism from all over Asia, you probably already have community transmission. As Dr. Anthony Fauci says, now you have to focus on mitigation with social distancing measures. You will still want to test as widely as your resources will allow for the coronavirus, and eventually get back to containment.

During the Great Influenza of 1918-1919, American Samoa closed itself off and did well. Western Samoa, now Independent Samoa, did not close itself off and lost a quarter of its population. If your island ends up being the American Samoa or Tasmania of today's pandemic, you will owe it to the foresight of your leaders.

Ishmael Togamae, Sheldon Riklon, Kamal Gunawardane, and Seiji Yamada are physicians who have practiced in Micronesia.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

7 reasons you probably should have a trust, not a will

Have you considered what will happen to your stuff when you pass away? Most people haven't. Not seriously anyway. And so when their time ends, they leave a mess for their loved ones to clean up. If you'd like to save your family from the trouble and squabbling that normally follows a person's failure to plan ahead, you need to create a will or a revocable living trust, or RLT.

But knowing which document to use is not always so easy. Sometimes a will is ideal. But usually an RLT is better. Here's seven reasons why.

Speed. Wills go through probate (the court-supervised process for paying your debts and transferring your assets after you die). RLTs do not. The effect is that it takes six months to several years to wrap up a will. By contrast, an RLT can be settled in weeks. So, if you want your loved ones to quickly have clear title to land and other assets, an RLT is the way to go.

Privacy. Again, wills go through probate while RLTs do not. Probate is public. Anyone can look at a will. Anyone can see what property you owned and who you gave it to. A trust, on the other hand, is private. Few people have the right to see it. So few people will know what you owned and who you gave it to, which is good for you and your beneficiaries.

Cost. Wills normally cost less than an RLT in the short term. But they are pricier in the long run. That's because a will is a two-time expense whereas an RLT is a one-time fee. In other words, with a will, you pay the lawyer for drafting the will and a second time when they probate your estate. For a trust, though, you only pay for the trust since there will either be no probate or an expedited one to address miscellaneous assets that weren't in your trust.

Potential litigation. Wills are perhaps the most litigated documents in the U.S. legal system. Trusts, in contrast, almost never generate lawsuits. The main reason for the difference is that many people have the right to file a lawsuit challenging a will; few have the same right to contest a trust.

A lawsuit is particularly likely in the following four scenarios. First, if you have no close relatives. Second, if you have several kids and gave a better deal to one kid than the rest. Third, if you've been married more than once and kids from earlier marriages get left out or shorted. And, fourth, if you aren't married but have a long-term partner (for example, a common-law spouse) who is not popular with the other heirs.

If any of these situations apply to you, then you may be an especially good candidate for an RLT.

Ancillary probate. A will must go through probate in every place where you own land. So, if you own land in the CNMI and Guam, the will would need to go through probate here and again in Guam. An RLT bypasses this double dose of delays and expenses because it avoids probate altogether.

Continuity of business affairs. As mentioned earlier, wills go through probate. And probate is public. So if you own and operate a small business and pass it to your heirs through probate, it will be subject to the probate process.

Part of that process will include the probate administrator filing regular reports about the business with the court (so that the court can double check that the business is being handled properly until the estate's interest is sold). The problem with this is that the reports are public. So, if the estate wants to sell the business, potential buyers can access the same information, which makes it difficult for the probate administrator to get top dollar.

On the other hand, trusts are private and avoid probate. So, a

FINE PRINT**By JORDAN SUNDELL**

Special to the Saipan Tribune



Jordan Sundell is a lawyer primarily practicing business, real estate, estate-planning, and asset-protection law. He formerly worked for the CNMI Supreme Court and Bridge Capital and is now general counsel for several real-estate companies, including JZ Group. His columns—focused mainly on real estate, small business, and estate planning—are published every other Tuesday. Be sure to like the Fine Print on Facebook!

trustee (the person administering the trust) will have an easier time maximizing the value of a sale. Plus, they won't need to go through the time and expense of obtaining court approval for the sale.

Less estate taxes. Under current law, estate tax is only an issue for the top 1%. But for that fortunate few, a will is a poor vehicle for maximizing their unlimited marital deduction and thus minimizing their estate tax. They would be better served with an RLT that contains sub-trusts such as a credit-shelter trust.

What have we learned? That for most people an RLT is usually better than a will. To verify if that's the case for you too, speak with a knowledgeable estate-planning attorney about your situation.

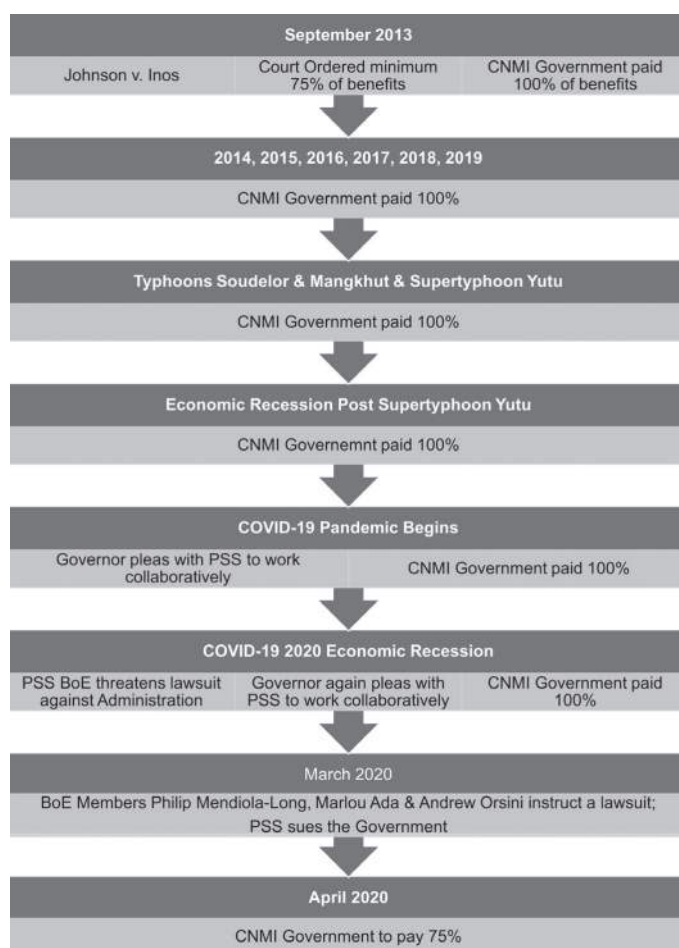
This column is for informational purposes only and is not intended to be taken as legal advice. For your specific case, consult a lawyer.

Open letter to government retirees

To the retirees of the Commonwealth government, surviving spouses and minor children beneficiaries: I am saddened to inform you that starting with the next scheduled payment on April 15, 2020, the CNMI government will be unable to obtain the necessary funding to provide for the 25% cover payments to government retirees, surviving spouses and minor children. I have agonized over this decision and have exhausted as much avenues as possible. Unfortunately, under the circumstances before us, these efforts were simply not enough.

Last month, under the direction of Board of Education members Phillip Mendiola-Long, Marylou Ada and Andrew Orsini, the Public School System filed a Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief demanding 25% of general funds. This lawsuit single-handedly restricted our government funds at a time when students are not in session, schools are not operated and while our community is deeply entrenched in our fight against the coronavirus disease, COVID-19.

Prior to filing their lawsuit, I, together with Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Fi-



nance, and members of the Legislature's leadership, invited PSS and the Board of Education to discuss our current financial status, the dire situation of our economy and pleaded with them to help in maximizing what little resources we have available. We met on two different occasions and each time, I thought that we were all willing to work amicably together for the greater good—that of our community as a whole. I specifically informed the Board of Education and PSS that an injunction would cause a 25% cut to retirees' pension. Unfortunately, Board of Education members Mendiola-Long, Ada and Orsini demanded immediate access to funds and proceeded to order the lawsuit against the advice of chairwoman Janice Tenorio and vice chairman Herman Atalig.

Because of the lawsuit, my hands are tied and any ability I had to guarantee

you your funds has now been stripped away. You have seen this government's efforts to keep our promise to you. Since the judgment was issued in Johnson v. Inos, Case No. CV-09-0023 in 2013, this government has paid you 100% of your benefits, retroactively paid you for the time you started receiving 75% and provided bonuses for three consecutive

By RALPH DLG TORRES

Special to the Saipan Tribune



Ralph DLG. Torres is the 9th governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the youngest governor in the United States.






years in 2016, 2017, and 2018. Collectively, this government has paid a total of \$328,708,089.08 for your benefits. Of that amount, \$225,523,657.57 was paid to the Settlement Fund as our obligation under the settlement agreement while \$103,184,431.51 was paid to retirees to cover the 25% difference in pension benefits.

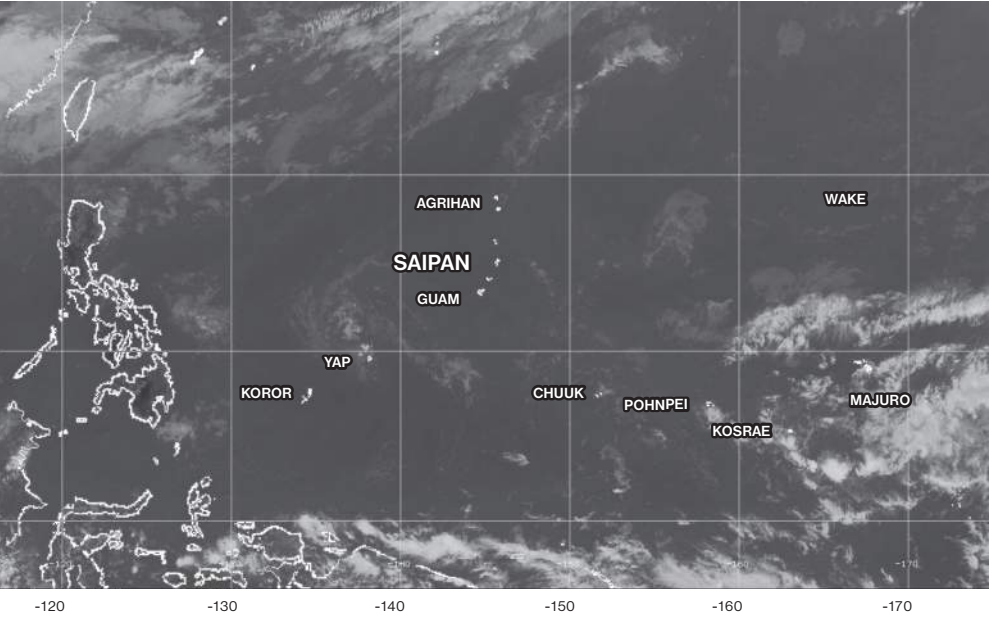
This government has managed to keep our promise through some of the most trying times faced by the CNMI. Through the damage of typhoons Soudelor and Mangkhut, continuing to provide the full benefits our retirees have earned was a top priority. Even through the devastation of Super Typhoon Yutu, I made sure that retirees received 100% of their pension benefits. And when the lingering economic recession caused by Super Typhoon Yutu forced the government to take austerity measures in 2019, this government still paid you 100% of benefits.

Thus, you know first-hand this government's commitment to give you 100% of your benefits. I am sorry that certain members of the Board of Education's only commitment is to selfishly guard its interest at the expense of our community. I am sorry that these acts of self-interest have led to this difficult decision.

The timing of these actions is unfortunate. COVID-19 still stalks our islands and lurks in the corners of our streets. We must persevere and now, more than ever, we must fight against self-interest and work toward bringing forward a community that puts the needs of others before their own.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
									
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.		Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	
88°	77°	87°	76°	88°	77°	88°	77°	88°	77°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 6:32 AM, MONDAY, APRIL 6, 2020

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Partly cloudy skies, moderate trades and isolated showers are present this morning in the Marianas. Seas at the buoys run anywhere from 5 to 6.5 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Mostly Sunny	86° / 77°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	84° / 78°	
Yap	Showers	86° / 79°	
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	87° / 81°	
Pohnpei	Windy	85° / 80°	
Kosrae	Windy	85° / 80°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:08 AM	6:30 PM
Wednesday	6:07 AM	6:30 PM
Thursday	6:06 AM	6:30 PM
Friday	6:06 AM	6:30 PM
Saturday	6:05 AM	6:30 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	5:23 AM	5:43 PM
Wednesday	-	6:10 AM	6:45 PM
Thursday	-	6:57 AM	7:46 PM
Friday	-	7:45 AM	8:48 PM
Saturday	-	8:36 AM	9:50 PM

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AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Showers	66° / 57°	
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	64° / 41°	
Hong Kong	Showers	70° / 66°	
Honolulu	Showers	80° / 68°	
London	Sunny	68° / 46°	
Los Angeles	Showers	62° / 52°	
Manila	Mostly Sunny	93° / 79°	
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	64° / 50°	
Miami	Partly Cloudy	83° / 72°	
New York	Partly Cloudy	66° / 51°	
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	66° / 45°	
Paris	Partly Cloudy	73° / 50°	
Busan	Partly Cloudy	64° / 48°	
Rome	Sunny	70° / 46°	
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	81° / 63°	
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	56° / 48°	
Seoul	Sunny	57° / 34°	
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	68° / 48°	
Washington, DC	Showers	68° / 58°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
12:49 AM	LOW TIDE	0.02	
7:12 AM	HIGH TIDE	2.04	
1:21 PM	LOW TIDE	0.50	
7:08 PM	HIGH TIDE	2.06	

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NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

GOVERNMENT RESOURCE LISTING AS OF
MARCH 27, 2020



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

GOVERNMENT RESOURCE LISTING AS OF
MARCH 27, 2020



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC)
Monday - Friday
Customer Service & Customer Service
8:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Tel: (670) 664-4282
Pay bills online at www.cucgov.org or
via phone by calling toll free 1-855-729-2282



**Office of the Attorney General
Civil and Criminal Divisions**
Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Tel: (670) 237-7500/7600



**Department of Community and Cultural Affairs
Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP)**
Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 3:00 PM
Tel: (670) 237-2801/2802



**Department of Finance
Division of Revenue & Taxation**
CASHIER ONLY
Monday - Friday
7:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Tel: (670) 664-1000



Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
Accepting Calls From Existing Customers Only
Tel: (670) 287-1475



Division of Youth Services (DYS) On-Call
Saipan: (670) 285-2780 / 285-2781 / 287-1773
Tinian: (670) 287-3268
Rota: (670) 287-2553



**Department of Public Works (DPW)
Solid Waste Management Division
Lower Base Transfer Station**
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7:30 AM - 11:00 AM
Tel: (670) 322-3745



Chalan Kanoa Post Office
Monday - Friday
7:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Saturday
7:30 AM - 11:30 AM




Marpi Landfill
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Tel: (670) 322-2761



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Monday - Friday
8:30 AM - 3:00 PM
Tel: (670) 234-6503

COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION



COVID-19 Health Tent
Patients arriving at CHCC with respiratory symptoms or fever will be screened outside of the main CHCC facility in a tent near the main hospital entrance on the upper level. Operating Monday - Friday (7:30 AM - 6:00 PM) and Saturday - Sunday (8:00 AM - 5:00 PM)

Mental Health Care Line
For mental health support and coping skills. Please call (670) 285-1856/1857. Monday - Sunday (7:30 AM - 7:00 PM)

Outpatient Clinics
Family Care Clinic: Monday - Friday (7:30 AM - 4:30 PM) and Saturday (8:00 AM - 5:00 PM by appointment only)

Women's Clinic: Monday - Friday (7:30 AM - 4:30 PM)

Children's Clinic: Monday - Friday (7:30 AM - 4:30 PM)

Pharmacy
Monday - Friday: 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Saturday, Sunday and Holidays: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Patients can call ahead to refill prescriptions. Have your prescription number ready. Tel: (670) 236-8798

Immunization Clinic
For child vaccinations, please visit the CHCC Children's Clinic. For adult vaccinations, please visit CHCC Family's Care Clinic

Tuberculosis/Hansen's Prevention Program
Patients of these programs will be contacted by program staff for more information.

HIV/STD Prevention Program
Patients of these programs will be contacted by program staff for more information.

Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program and Nicotine Cessation Programs are temporarily unavailable.

Cafeteria
The cafeteria has adjusted their hours to Monday - Friday 7:00 AM - 1:00 PM. We are limiting the number of visitors in the cafeteria to 10 people at one time.

Dental Clinic
The CHCC's Dental Clinic is currently open for dental emergencies only. Dental emergencies include: heavy bleeding from the mouth, tooth trauma, swelling or infection, and severe toothaches (pain prevents you from eating or sleeping and is does not respond to over the counter pain medication).

Visitors to CHCC
All visitors to the CHCC will be screened, and their temperature taken. Non-patients with a fever will not be allowed in the facility. No guests are allowed in the CHCC hospital. Patients who are admitted to the hospital will be limited to one caretaker at a time. Outpatient visits to the clinics are limited to the patient and a maximum of one other person. For example, if a child has an appointment in the Children's Clinic, only one parent or guardian may accompany them. Parents with multiple children should leave other children with a caretaker. Please plan accordingly.

Dialysis
Temporarily not allowing visitors and caregivers to sit with patients on dialysis during treatment. Patients on dialysis, please call the CHCC Dialysis Center ahead of time at (670) 236-8303/4 if you are experiencing a new cough, fever, shortness of breath, or any other symptoms that are unusual for you.

Funerals
If you plan to visit the CHCC chapel for a funeral, you will be asked to limit the number of visitors in the chapel at one time. This is done to increase the physical space between individuals so we can avoid the spread of illness and protect the safety of our health care facility. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

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COVID-19 HOTLINE TEL: (670) 285-1352 /1542/1672/1845

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Business

Eats Easy and its new mission

By **BEA CABRERA**
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Launched in February of this year, Eats Easy is CNMI's first food delivery app that aims to deliver hot and fresh meals right straight at your doorstep.

The idea came about to cater to customers that have no means of transportation, busy professionals that don't have time to cook or go out, *man'amkos*, and disabled persons.

Nowadays, Eats Easy's new mission is to stay operational and deliver food to anyone who is hunkered down at home to prevent spread of COVID-19 in the community.

Eats Easy president Clint Albert said that Eats Easy aims to create a simple and seamless way of delivering food to clients.

"In almost every part of the world there is some sort

of food delivery system from restaurants or apps like ours. We realized the most likely reason we don't have it on island is due to the fact that houses are so hard to find here because there are no street signs, names, and even house numbers," he said.

"But we didn't want that to stop us with our vision to help people... Foodies that have no means to visit their favorite restaurants so we created a GPS-based app to address this... we currently deliver for The Shack, Oink, Sunny Side, Naked Fish, Poki Yaki... other restaurants include Shirley's, Oleai Beach Bar & Grill, Loco & Taco, Cristiano's, Ajisen Ramen, Caravans, and 360 Revolving Restaurant but they are temporarily closed... we want to tell the community to stay home, stay safe because

we got you," he added.

The Eats Easy app is available at the Google Play Store and on their website at www.conquerthehunger.com.

"We are currently developing the version 2 of the app and this should take about two weeks of work to finish it. Once it's done iPhone users can download via apple store... a new web version will also be launched," Albert said.

"For now, we are offering non-Android users to still reach out to us via our contact numbers, Whatsapp, or FB messenger so we can still help them out with the delivery service," Albert said.

According to Albert, even before the COVID-19 pandemic, their team has been trained to uphold a strict standard in food handling and hygiene.

"We follow such quality standards such as washing our hands before leaving the office to go for a delivery, cleaning, and sanitizing our insulated bags twice a day, making sure we do not touch the food at any time. We pack the bagged orders in the insulated bags in front of our restaurant partners' reps. The only time we open the bags again is in front of the customers who ordered them," he said.

"Especially during this time, we added more steps to ensure safety from the virus. We use



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Eats Easy's first food delivery service was done for Rachel by Eats Easy service representative Jun.

IT&E extends no data caps, no late fees for postpaid subscribers

IT&E announced that its subscribers will continue to enjoy no data caps until April 30, 2020. In addition, IT&E's bill payment deadline has been pushed back from the 15th of the month, so subscribers can continue to pay their monthly bill anytime during the month and no late fees or suspensions will be applied.

"IT&E recognizes there continues to be the need for residents to stay informed, keep up with online education, and telecommute efficiently. We, along with the rest of the community, hope that the situation improves, but in the meantime we want to do our part to help our community overcome the challenges we face," said IT&E CEO Jim Oehlerking.

IT&E remains committed to helping flatten the curve of the spread of COVID-19. Strict sanitization and social distancing procedures are in place at its open locations. Facemasks are required to enter the stores and the number of customers allowed at a time in each store is limited.

IT&E hours of operation are as follows:

GUAM

■ Harmon — 9am-3pm,

Monday to Friday

■ AAFES — 10am-7pm, Monday to Sunday

■ Micronesia Mall, Agaña Shopping Center and GPO stores are closed until further notice

CNMI

■ Chalan Laulau and TSL Plaza, Saipan — 7:30am-3:30pm, Monday to Friday

■ Tinian — 8am-4pm, Monday to Friday

■ Rota — 8am-4pm, Wednesday to Friday

Updates on store hours can be found at www.ite.net and on IT&E's social media pages.

For those who prefer not to visit, bill payments and inquiries can be made online at store.ite.net/onlinebilling or by phone at (671) 922-4483 [Guam]/(670) 682-4483 [CNMI].

To further encourage residents to stay home, IT&E launched the Stay Home Challenge Instagram contest for residents to share photos and videos of how they are social distancing at home for a chance to win the Samsung Galaxy S20 Ultra, S20+ or S20. Contest details can be found on IT&E's social media pages. (PR)

alcohol to sanitize our hands every time we get in the car, touch money, before touching insulated bags and making a delivery, we added alcohol in the cleaning process of the bags, we clean and wipe down the inside of the cars with alcohol every day and we require our service reps to wear a mask when picking up and delivering food," he added.

Albert works alongside longtime friends Marco San-

tiago, East Eats vice president; Lovely Macaranas, treasurer; Jeric Despi, tech head; and their team of service reps.

"Our goal is to hopefully partner with most of the restaurants on island and we would like to create a special item with each one of them that's only available to order in the app. For example a Shirley's Eats Easy Burger or The Shack's Eats Easy Smoothie," he said.

"We are also looking into different innovations and ideas to help our partner restaurants and customers. One of the things we will be doing is the Annual Eats Easy Foodie Awards where we give out awards like Best Chicken on Island, Most Delivered, and the like," he added.

For more information, call (670) 286-0520 and (670) 286-0432 and email: conquerthehunger@gmail.com.

Grocery workers are key during the virus. And they're afraid

AUSTIN, Texas (AP)—Every day, grocery workers are restocking toilet paper, eggs, produce and canned goods as fast as the items fly off the shelves.

They disinfect keypads, freezer handles and checkout counters as hundreds of people weave around them, sometimes standing too close for comfort amid the coronavirus pandemic. Some work for hours behind clear plastic barriers installed at checkout counters, bulwarks against sudden sneezes or coughs that can propel germs.

They aren't doctors or nurses, yet they have been praised for their dedication by Pope Francis, former U.S. President Barack Obama and countless people on social media, as infections and death counts rise.

From South Africa to Italy to the U.S., grocery workers—many in low-wage jobs—are

manning the frontlines amid worldwide lockdowns, their work deemed essential to keep food and critical goods flowing. Some fear falling sick or bringing the virus home to vulnerable loved ones, and frustration is mounting as some demand better workplace protections, including shorter hours to allow them to rest, and "hazard" pay for working closely with the public.

"Everyone is scared everywhere, here in South Africa and everywhere in the world," said Zandile Mlotshwa, a cashier at Spar supermarket in the Johannesburg suburb of Norwood.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, and the vast majority survive. But for others, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can be more se-

vere, even causing pneumonia or death.

In the U.S., a handful of states—Minnesota and Vermont were the first—have given grocery workers a special classification that allows them to put their children in state-paid child care while they work. Unions in Colorado, Alaska, Texas and many other states are pressing governors to elevate grocery workers to the status of first responders.

"The government's responsibility is to step up in these moments," said Sarah Cherin, chief of staff for the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union in Seattle, the first U.S. epicenter of COVID-19.

The union, which represents about 23,000 grocery workers and 18,000 health care workers, won early concessions for higher pay.

"We have always been a

group of people who come to work when others stay home," Cherin said. "Our workers need the same protection others get."

U.S. grocery and food delivery workers are insisting employers pay them more and provide masks, gloves, gowns and access to testing. Whole Foods workers called for a recent "sickout" to demand better conditions, including double pay. A group of independent contractors for the Instacart grocery delivery service walked out to force more protections.

Some of the biggest employers in the U.S. are responding.

Kroger, the nation's largest grocery chain, said it will give all hourly employees a \$2-an-hour "Hero Bonus" through April 18. That follows temporary \$2 pay bumps by Walmart, Target and others.

Nation

Governors plead for food stamp flexibility amid pandemic

PHOENIX (AP)—Yvonne Knight, who has respiratory problems that make her especially vulnerable in the coronavirus pandemic, can't buy groceries online with her food stamps—even though each trip to the store is now a risky endeavor.

Going out to buy food terrifies the 38-year-old woman with cerebral palsy, but she is one of millions of people who receive food aid through the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program that can't be used in flexible ways.

"Every time I go out, I put myself at risk—and other people," said Knight, who lives in Erie, Pennsylvania. "I'm so terrified when people come up to me now. I don't want to go out to the store."

Buying groceries online—which many Americans are doing to drastically reduce how often they leave their homes—is only open to SNAP recipients in six U.S. states, and Pennsylvania is not one of them.

Now, state governments and food security activists across the country are imploring the U.S. Department of Agriculture to make the program more flexible and easier to access at a time when so many people are losing their jobs and turning to the government for support.

The calls have even come from conservative states where lawmakers have tried to reduce or limit food aid.

In Arizona, Republican Gov. Doug Ducey has asked



In this March 25, 2020, photo provided by Yvonne Knight, Knight uses the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, to pay for groceries in Erie, Pa. AP

the agency to waive interview requirements for applicants, allow families to purchase hot meals, waive work requirements for some and enact other changes that would help families deal with the economic fallout of the pandemic.

Ashley St. Thomas, the public policy manager for the Arizona Food Bank Network, lauded the governor's request, adding that relaxing requirements that program recipients prove they are working at least some hours each month is "critical right now"—es-

pecially as millions get laid off and jobs dry up for people who work in the informal or gig economies.

Amanda Siebe, a 35-year-old who lives in Hillsboro, Oregon, suffers from a chronic pain condition and has a compromised immune system, so she tries to avoid leaving the house.

But she struggles to stretch her SNAP benefit—\$194 a month—in normal times, and she would love to have more cash now to be able to buy larger food quantities to

limit grocery trips.

"We need food that will not only last the whole month but give us a little bit to stock up so we can get ahead without having to worry what's gonna happen in the future," Siebe said. "Especially because the majority of us cannot leave the house very often."

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, includ-

ing pneumonia, and can lead to death—meaning those people need to take special precautions.

The increased need for food aid and calls to make it more flexible come directly on the heels of a stalled Trump administration attempt to purge an estimated 700,000 people from SNAP rolls. The changes would have taken away states' ability to waive a rule that able-bodied adults without dependents show a certain number of hours worked per month. A court blocked

the changes, and the USDA vowed to appeal.

Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue now says he's undecided and notes that the congressional virus relief package contains a blanket waiver on the work requirement—though the agency seems likely to revisit the issue in calmer times.

For now, with large parts of the economy shuttered, state governments are clamoring to expand the recipient ranks and cut the red tape.

In Pennsylvania, where Knight lives, Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf on Thursday asked the agency to waive several requirements. He urged the federal government to expand a pilot program launched in New York and Washington state that allows people to use their debit-style benefit cards to order online groceries. Amazon and Walmart now accept SNAP payments online in Iowa, Nebraska, Oregon, Washington and New York, where ShopRite also accepts the payments. In Alabama, Wright's Markets, Inc. accepts the online payments.

In Missouri, the state's social services department requested and was granted waivers to extend SNAP certifications by six months so that people won't be kicked out of the program during the pandemic.

Food security advocates recommend the government go further, giving states blanket latitude to adjust their programs.

NY's death count nears 4,200, but there's a glimmer of hope

NEW YORK (AP)—A slight dip in new coronavirus deaths in New York over the last 24 hours may be a glimmer of hope that the spread is slowing, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said Sunday as overall fatalities in the state climbed to nearly 4,200.

Cuomo said it was too soon to determine whether the pandemic had reached its apex.

"We could either be very near the apex, or the apex could be a plateau and we could be on the plateau right now," Cuomo said. "You can't do this day to day. You have to look at three or four days to see a pattern."

The state reported 594 new coronavirus deaths on Sunday—a small decrease compared to the 630 new fatalities announced the day before. ICU admissions and intubations were also down, the governor said, while the discharge rate from hospitals was rising.

Later in the evening, New York City officials also re-

ported a dip in fatalities. As of 4:45 p.m. it said deaths had risen by 218 since the evening before, to a total of 2,472. By comparison, there were 387 new deaths reported in the previous 24 hours and 305 the day before that.

Cuomo sounded cautiously optimistic even as he urged New Yorkers to remain vigilant and continue adhering to the strict social distancing policies in place.

"The coronavirus is truly vicious," he said. "It's an effective killer. People who are very vulnerable must stay isolated and protected."

New Yorkers hunkered down Sunday as the city entered what authorities called a critical phase of the crisis. Those venturing outdoors for groceries or exercise largely heeded the city's new guidance to wear face coverings such as scarves or bandannas—a sight far less common a week ago.

Mayor Bill de Blasio also found cause for encouragement, telling reporters that while the city still needs thousands more ventilators, its supply had outlasted earlier projections. Like Cuomo, he stopped short of declaring a turning point in the crisis.

"I see a few signs that are a little hopeful, for sure," he said. "But I think it's early to be able to declare that. Let's hope and pray, but we're not quite there yet."

Among the deaths Sunday was the first Rikers Island Jail Complex inmate to die from COVID-19. The Department of Corrections said that 321 staff members and 273 inmates have tested positive.

De Blasio said earlier in the day at his briefing that 1,000 prisoners in city jails have been released because of the pandemic.

Here are the latest coronavirus developments in New York:

HEALTH CARE CHALLENGES

The governor said the state's health care system remained over capacity, adding New York is "running short on supplies all across the board." More than 122,000 people have tested positive for the coronavirus and at least 16,000 people remain hospitalized.

"The operational challenge for the health care system is impossible," Cuomo said. "It's not an exercise. It's not a drill. It's a statement of reality."

The federal government was deploying 1,000 doctors, nurses and respiratory technicians to New York, including 325 scheduled to begin arriving in New York City as early as Sunday.

The statewide balance of coronavirus cases has been "relatively stable" over the past few days, Cuomo said, but officials were tracking what they called a shift to Long Island.

Tiger at NYC's Bronx Zoo tests positive for coronavirus

NEW YORK (AP)—A tiger at the Bronx Zoo has tested positive for the new coronavirus, in what is believed to be the first known infection in an animal in the U.S. or a tiger anywhere, federal officials and the zoo said Sunday.

The 4-year-old Malayan tiger named Nadia—and six other tigers and lions that have also fallen ill—are believed to have been infected by a zoo employee who wasn't yet showing symptoms, the zoo said. The first animal started showing symptoms March 27, and all are doing well and expected to recover, said the zoo, which has been closed to the public since March 16 amid the surging coronavirus outbreak in New York.

The test result stunned zoo officials: "I couldn't believe it," director Jim Breheny said. But he hopes the find-

ing can contribute to the global fight against the virus that causes COVID-19.

"Any kind of knowledge that we get on how it's transmitted, how different species react to it, that knowledge somehow is going to provide a greater base resource for people," he said in an interview.

The finding raises new questions about transmission of the virus in animals. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, which confirmed Nadia's test result at its veterinary lab, said there are no known cases of the virus in U.S. pets or livestock.

"There doesn't appear to be, at this time, any evidence that suggests that the animals can spread the virus to people or that they can be a source of the infection in the United States," Dr. Jane Rooney, a veterinarian and a USDA official, said in an interview.

Asia

US sees coronavirus window to push Taiwan's global status



In this Sept. 25, 2019 file photo, President Donald Trump meets with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the InterContinental Barclay New York hotel during the United Nations General Assembly in New York. AP

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Trump administration is seizing the opportunity of the coronavirus pandemic to push a cause that has long been an irritant in U.S. relations with China: Taiwan. The virus has added yet another dimension to U.S.-China tensions that were already

wrecked by a trade war and heated discussions over intellectual property, human rights and Chinese policies in Hong Kong and the South China Sea.

And, while U.S.-China differences over Taiwan have waxed and waned for decades, they have persisted and are

reaching new heights as the world grapples with the exponential spread of the COVID-19 virus. As the pandemic has grown, U.S. officials and lawmakers have stepped up alternately bashing China for a lack of transparency over the outbreak and praising Taiwan for its response to the outbreak.

The administration is pressing for Taiwan's inclusion as a separate entity in international organizations like the World Health Organization and International Civil Aviation Organization, both of which have significant roles in anti-virus efforts. But, it is more broadly pushing back against Beijing's recent diplomatic victories over Taipei that have included several small countries abandoning diplomatic recognition

of Taiwan in favor of China.

In the past 10 days, the administration has taken at least two specific overt steps to boost Taiwan, which China regards as a renegade province, in the international arena.

Aware of the moves, China's government has been pushing back. Taiwan has developed its own identity since separating from China during civil war in 1949, but has never declared formal independence. Beijing still claims sovereignty over the island of 23 million people and threatens to use force to seize control if necessary.

On Thursday, the State Department announced it had convened a virtual conference to promote "expanding Taiwan's

participation on the global stage." Just days before, on March 26, the White House announced that President Donald Trump signed a law requiring the U.S. to press for Taiwanese recognition in international forums and to take unspecified action against countries that "undermine the security or prosperity of Taiwan."

At the March 31 conference, the participants "discussed ongoing efforts to reinstate Taiwan's observer status at the World Health Assembly, as well as other avenues for closer coordination between Taiwan and the World Health Organization," the State Department said.

"Countries around the world can benefit from better understanding the 'Taiwan Model', as

well as the generous contributions and impressive expertise Taiwan—a vibrant democracy and force for good—brings to the global community," it said.

"Taiwan has a role to play in global health and should be a World Health Assembly observer," the department said in a follow-up tweet on Friday.

The "Taiwan Model" refers to the early strict steps the island took to stem the spread of the virus, which as of late last week had reported only 329 confirmed cases and five deaths despite its close proximity to mainland China. In addition, Taiwan has announced plans to donate 7 million protective masks to European countries and another 2 million to the United States.

9 rebels, 3 Indian soldiers killed in Kashmir fighting

SRINAGAR, India (AP)—Nine rebels and three Indian soldiers were killed in a pair of gunbattles in disputed Kashmir, an Indian army official said Sunday.

Indian soldiers killed five suspected militants along the highly militarized de facto front line in Keran sector on Sunday as an armed group of militants infiltrated from the Pakistani side of Kashmir into the Indian-controlled part, said Col. Rajesh Kalia, an Indian army spokesman.

Kalia said three soldiers were also killed. He did not specify the number of injured, saying only that some others who were injured were undergoing treatment.

There was no independent confirmation of the incident.

The other gunbattle broke out in a neighborhood in southern Kulgam town as police and soldiers scoured the area looking for militants on Saturday, Kalia said. He said that as troops began

conducting searches, they came under heavy gunfire, leading to a clash that killed four militants.

The fighting comes amid an ongoing lockdown in Kashmir to combat spread of the coronavirus.

Nuclear-armed rivals India and Pakistan each administer part of Kashmir, but both claim the Himalayan territory in its entirety. Rebel groups have been fighting since 1989 for Kashmir's independence or merger with neighboring Pakistan. India has accused Pakistan of arming and training the rebels, which Pakistan denies.

Nearly 70,000 people have been killed in the fighting and the ensuing Indian crackdown.

Anti-India sentiment runs deep among the region's mostly Muslim population and most people support the rebels' cause against Indian rule despite a decades-long military crackdown to fight the armed rebellion.

Malaysia detains boatload of 202 presumed Rohingya refugees

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—Malaysian authorities said they have arrested a boatload of 202 people believed to be minority Muslim Rohingya refugees after their boat was found adrift Sunday morning near the northern resort island of Langkawi.

A Northern District maritime official, Capt. Zulinda Ramly, said the refugees included 152 men, 45 women and five children. She said some of the migrants told officials that the boat's skipper and two others, believed to be behind the smuggling syndicate, had escaped

while they were at sea.

Zulinda said maritime officials have taken precautionary measures to prevent any possible transmission of the COVID-19 virus while handling the group. The refugees were taken to the maritime office for further investigation before they are handed to the immigration department, she added. There were no further details on where the refugees came from.

More than 700,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh after a counterinsurgency campaign by Myanmar's military in the western state of Rakhine in

response to attacks in 2017 by a Rohingya insurgent group. Bangladesh now hosts more than a million Rohingya refugees, and traffickers usually lure refugees by promising them a better life overseas.

Hundreds have been stopped by Bangladeshi coast guard officials trying to escape from one of the world's largest migrant camps.

In February, 16 Rohingya refugees from a Bangladeshi migrant camp drowned after the overcrowded boat that was supposed to take them to Malaysia capsized in the Bay of Bengal.

With more than a million refugees tightly packed in the camp, aid workers are also concerned about a possible outbreak of the coronavirus, although there are no confirmed cases yet.

Buddhist-majority Myanmar has long considered the Rohingya to be "Bengalis" from Bangladesh even though many of their families have lived in the country for generations. Nearly all have been denied citizenship since 1982, effectively rendering them stateless, and they are also denied freedom of movement and other basic rights.

World

Europe sees more signs of hope as Italy's virus curve falls

ROME (AP)—Europe saw further signs of hope in the coronavirus outbreak Sunday as Italy's daily death toll was at its lowest in more than two weeks and its infection curve was finally on a downward slope. In Spain, new deaths dropped for the third straight day.

But the optimism was tempered by Britain's jump in virus deaths that outpaced the daily toll in Italy.

Angelo Borrelli, the head of Italy's Civil Protection agency on Sunday, said there were 525 deaths in the 24-hour period since Saturday evening. That's the lowest such figure in the country since 427 deaths were registered on March 19.

Italy now has a total of 15,887 deaths and nearly 129,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases.

A day shy of one month under a national lockdown that the Italian government ordered, the lower count of day-to-day deaths brought some encouragement.

The number of intensive care unit beds occupied by COVID-19 patients has also showed a decrease in the last few days, including in northern Lombardy, Italy's most stricken region.

Borrelli also noted with a



AP
A couple applauds from their balcony in support of the medical staff that are working on the COVID-19 virus outbreak in Barcelona, Spain, Saturday, April 4, 2020.

measure of satisfaction that the number of those hospitalized but not in ICU beds also has decreased.

Italy recorded 4,316 new cases Sunday. Earlier in the outbreak, daily increases in case loads topped the 6,000 mark.

"The curve, which had been

plateauing for days, is starting to descend," national health official Silvio Brusaferro told reporters, referring to graphs indicating daily numbers of confirmed cases.

But Borrelli warned: "This good news shouldn't make us drop our guard."

For days, anticipating a possible downward slope in the curve, government and health authorities in Italy have cautioned that restrictions on movement would likely last in some form for weeks.

The virus causes mild to moderate symptoms in most people, but for some, especially older adults and the infirm, it can cause severe pneumonia and lead to death.

As warm, sunny weather beckoned across Europe,

Queen Elizabeth II appealed to Britons to exercise self-discipline in "an increasingly challenging time."

Britain recorded 708 new coronavirus deaths Saturday while Italy reported 631 deaths that day. With 621 more deaths reported on Sunday, Britain has 4,934 virus deaths overall among 47,806 cases. Those coming down with the virus in the U.K. include Prime Minister Boris Johnson, the health secretary,

England's chief medical official and Prince Charles, heir to the British throne.

There are wide fears that Johnson's Conservative government didn't take the virus seriously enough at first and that beautiful spring weather will tempt Britons and others to break social distancing rules.

Restrictions on movement vary from country to country. In Germany and Britain, residents can exercise and walk their dogs, as well as go to the supermarket and do other essential tasks.

Swedish authorities have advised the public to practice social distancing, but schools, bars and restaurants are still open.

Spain announced 6,023 confirmed new infections Sunday, taking its national tally to 130,759 but down from an increase of 7,026 infections in the previous day. Spain's confirmed new virus deaths dropped for the third straight day, to 674—the first time daily deaths have fallen below 800 in the past week.

"We are starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel," Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said.

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson hospitalized with virus

LONDON (AP)—British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was admitted to a hospital Sunday for tests, his office said, because he is still suffering symptoms, 10 days after he was diagnosed with COVID-19.

Johnson's office said the admission to an undisclosed London hospital came on the advice of his doctor and was not an emergency. The prime minister's Downing St. office said it was a "precautionary step" and Johnson remains in charge of the government.

Johnson, 55, has been quarantined in his Downing St. residence since being diagnosed with COVID-19 on March 26—the first known head of government to fall ill with the virus.

Johnson has continued to preside at daily meetings on Britain's response to the outbreak and has released several video messages during his 10 days in isolation.

In a message Friday, a flushed and red-eyed Johnson said he said he was feeling better but still had a fever.

The virus causes mild to moderate symptoms in most people, but for some, especially older adults and the infirm, it can cause pneumonia and lead to death.

U.S. President Donald Trump

offered encouragement to Johnson as he opened a White House briefing on the pandemic Sunday. "All Americans are praying for him," Trump said.

Johnson has received medical advice remotely during his illness, but going to a hospital means doctors can see him in person.

Dr. Rupert Beale, a group leader of the cell biology of infection lab at the Francis Crick Institute for biomedical studies, said doctors would likely "be monitoring important vital signs such as oxygen saturations," as well as performing blood tests, assessing Johnson's organ function and possibly performing a CT scan on his chest to assess his lungs.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, who has been designated to take over if Johnson becomes incapacitated, is set to lead the government's coronavirus meeting Monday.

Johnson's fiancée, Carrie Symonds, 32, revealed Saturday that she spent a week in bed with coronavirus symptoms, though she wasn't tested. Symonds, who is pregnant, said she was now "on the mend." She has not been staying with the prime minister in Downing St. since his diagnosis.

The government said Sun-

day that almost 48,000 people have been confirmed to have COVID-19 in the U.K., and 4,934 have died.

Johnson replaced Theresa May as Conservative prime minister in July and won a resounding election victory in December on a promise to complete Britain's exit from the European Union. But Brexit, which became official Jan. 31, has been overshadowed by the coronavirus pandemic sweeping the globe.

Johnson's government was slower than those in some European countries to impose restrictions on daily life in response to the pandemic, leading his critics to accuse him of complacency. He imposed an effective nationwide lockdown March 23, but his government remains under huge pressure to boost the country's number of hospital beds and ventilators and to expand testing for the virus.

London has been the center of the outbreak in the U.K., and politicians and civil servants have been hit hard. Several other members of Johnson's government have also tested positive for the virus, including Health Secretary Matt Hancock and junior Health Minister Nadine Dorries. Both have recovered.

Desperate hunt for food by Peru's poor amid virus quarantine

LIMA, Peru (AP)—Pushing a shopping cart with two children, César Alegre emerges from the large, deteriorated house near Peru's presidential palace that is shared by 45 families to search for food. Sometimes he begs in markets. Sometimes he sells candies.

It is a task that was hard at the best of times, but with a month-long quarantine that has forced 32 million Peruvians to stay home and closed restaurants and food kitchens, it has become much harder.

"We eat once or twice a day," said the 52-year-old, who says he has spent time in six different prisons for theft. Many among the 100 or so residents of the three-story house are ex-convicts who can't find work. The old building is opposite Lima's San Lazaro church, which was founded in 1650 as a hospital for refugees from a leprosy outbreak.

Alegre and his children,

accompanied by a handful of neighbors, normally start out by walking about 2 miles (3 kilometers) to a market where they ask for food. The merchants give them potatoes, meat bones and overripe fruit that nobody wants to buy.

But these days the merchants are refusing to give them as much food, if any at all, because their sales have fallen amid the pandemic and strict measures that have kept people at home and shuttered the restaurants that would buy their goods.

"They're vagrants," said a meat vendor of the inhabitants of Alegre's building, which has earned the nickname "Luriganchito," or "Little Luriganchito," after Peru's most-populous prison, for the number of ex-convicts who reside there. The vendor said two weeks ago a young man from the building stole a bag of fish.

Besides begging in markets, Alegre also sells candy

on buses. Nowadays, passengers wear face masks and don't like strangers coming near them.

"The virus has highlighted the selfishness that man carries inside," he said.

The pandemic has spotlighted the wide gap between rich and poor in Peru and elsewhere in Latin America, and economists say a looming recession worse than any since World War II could push the continent's long-suffering poor into even more dire circumstances.

"The economic impact of what is happening is unprecedented," said Peru's economy minister, María Alva.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

Life & Style

Queen

delivers message of hope to UK amid virus outbreak

By **DANICA KIRKA**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Britain needed a message of hope Sunday. The queen delivered it.

Queen Elizabeth II offered support to a country locked down in the coronavirus pandemic, promising the nation that it would rise to the challenge and overcome the outbreak.

In a rare address to the nation, the 93-year-old monarch acknowledged the suffering that many families have experienced because of the COVID-19 crisis, which has infected more than 47,806 people in the U.K. and killed at least 4,934 of them. She drew upon wisdom from her decades as Britain's head of state to urge resolve in a time of crisis.

"While we have faced challenges before, this one is different," she said. "This time we join with all nations across the globe in a common endeavour, using the great advances of science and our instinctive compassion to heal."

"We will succeed—and that success will belong to every one of us."

Her remarks were broadcast only moments before Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Downing Street office announced he had been admitted to the hospital for "precautionary tests." The news will add to unease in Britain, which has been in lockdown for nearly two weeks.

The queen gives yearly Christmas messages but has given an address like this on only three previous occasions. She delivered speeches after the Queen Mother's death in 2002, before the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales in 1997, and at the time of the first Gulf War in 1991.

But times are unprecedented. She lauded Britain's beloved National Health Service in a broadcast that featured pictures of medical teams suiting up to go battle the virus. She praised other essential services, as images of soldiers loading medical equipment on trucks rolled on the screen. She also praised everyday citizens who are adhering to the terms of the lockdown and staying at home and helping to prevent the spread of the virus.

"I am sure the nation will join me in assuring you that



AP
In this image taken from video and made available by Buckingham Palace, Britain's Queen Elizabeth II addresses the nation and the Commonwealth from Windsor Castle, Windsor, England, Sunday April 5, 2020.

what you do is appreciated and every hour of your hard work brings us closer to a return to more normal times," the queen said. "I also want to thank those of you who are staying at home, thereby helping to protect the vulnerable and sparing many families the pain already felt by those who have lost loved ones."

"Together we are tackling this disease, and I want to reassure you that if we remain

united and resolute, then we will overcome it."

The leader who spends much of her time cutting ribbons and visiting charitable organizations, also made the point of mentioning the general public, such as the 750,000 people who volunteered to help the vulnerable.

"I hope in the years to come everyone will be able to take pride in how they responded to this challenge," she said.

"Those who come after us will say that the Britons of this generation were as strong as any."

"That the attributes of self-discipline, of quiet, good-humored resolve, and of fellow feeling still characterize this country."

The crisis has hit close to home for the queen. Her son and the heir to the throne, 71-year-old Prince Charles, had a mild case of the disease. She herself left London, the epicenter of Britain's outbreak,

and took up residence at her home in Windsor with her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh.

Both the monarch and her 98-year-old husband are among those over 70 whom the British government have advised to stay home for 12 weeks.

The virus causes mild to moderate symptoms in most people, but for some, especially older adults and the infirm, it can cause pneumonia and lead to death.

Marianne Faithfull in hospital with coronavirus and 'stable'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The English singer-songwriter Marianne Faithfull is being treated for coronavirus in a London hospital.

Her manager Francois Ravard said Sunday that Faithfull is stable, however, and responding to treatment.

"We all wish her well and a full and speedy recovery," Ravard said.

The 73-year-old has had a number of health issues over the years, including a long battle with hepatitis C and breast cancer, which she was diagnosed with in 2006.

An icon of the 1960s' British music scene, Faithfull rose to fame with the hit song "As Tears Go By." A bout of severe laryngitis coupled with drug use in the 1970s would forever alter her crisp, clear voice to become something lower, raspier and perhaps

even more distinctive. After an absence from music, she had a celebrated comeback in 1979 with the album "Broken English"

Her most recent album, "Negative Capability," was released in 2018 to wide acclaim.

Spoiled niece has history of misbehaving at parties

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I want to host a college graduation party for our son. The problem is, one of my sisters has four children -- three teenagers and an 11-year-old who doesn't behave at parties. My sister calls her "Our Little Precious." She and her husband come to events, ignore the kids and want this to be their time to "relax." Another sister has two teenagers who are very well behaved.

My husband wants to ban Little Precious from the graduation party and invite the well-behaved teenagers. I agree with my husband that I do not want another party ruined, especially since my son worked so hard to graduate. But I don't want to cause a permanent rift in the family either. My sister is very stubborn, hot-tempered and clueless. Advice?

SISTER IN THE MIDDLE

DEAR SISTER: Your son deserves to celebrate the milestone he has earned without the distraction of an unruly child casting a shadow over the event. Consider having a small gathering for immediate family only, and something larger at another time that includes your son's friends as well as your own. Or invite your sister and her family with the proviso that if Little Precious acts up, they will leave and take her home. Precious, my foot!

DEAR ABBY: At 73, I am blessed with excellent health

and stamina. The only nod to my age is that I like to have a 20-minute nap after lunch. However, my kids and others treat me like I'm 90. They keep asking how I feel and if I'm tired. My son-in-law "Dave" is anxious when I babysit my 4-year-old granddaughter unless it's at their home. How can I make clear to them that I'm as capable as I was 25 years ago without either insulting or angering them?

NAPPING GRANDMA IN L.A.

DEAR NAPPING: Your daughter and son-in-law are lucky. Their daughter has a healthy, caring grandma who is **WILLING** to look after her grandchild while Mom and Dad do ... whatever. Not all parents are so fortunate.

These days, 73 is not over the hill. Could Dave's concerns about your health be caused by ageism? Or does he prefer you do your babysitting at their house because he thinks yours isn't sufficiently childproof?

As to offending your daughter and her husband, if you prefer to babysit at your house, that should be your choice. But if they don't agree with that, suggest they hire someone because you will be playing tennis, a round of golf or training for a marathon.

DEAR ABBY: An acquaintance I see occasionally has a grooming problem I'm reluctant to tell him about because I

DEAR ABBY

By **ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



don't know him well: He has hairs growing out of his nose, and they are not only noticeable but distracting. How can I apprise him of this without embarrassing him and myself?

DIPLOMAT IN SAN FRANCISCO

DEAR DIPLOMAT: Allow me to answer that question by quoting an ancient Chinese proverb: "When in doubt, do nothing." While your intent is to be helpful, it would cause embarrassment, and I don't recommend it.

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Tibetan monk

5 Carnival city

8 Depleted

12 Spoken

13 Reply (Abbr.)

14 Exploits

15 Heel type

17 Denny's rival

18 Connections

19 Lengthy list

21 Macadamized

24 Butte's kin

25 Sleeping

26 Tijuana hat

30 Towboat

31 Laundry woe

32 Pledge

33 Detached, in music

35 Flying toy

36 Jug handles

37 Cardiff's country

DOWN

4 In cahoots

5 "Phooey!"

6 Bankbook

7 Traditional

8 Shrek, for one

9 Coffee vessel

10 Very bright

11 Catch sight of

12 Light touches

22 Border on

23 Lyra's brightest star

24 Castle

26 Begins

27 Satan's forte

28 Memory method

29 Is in debt

31 Read quickly

34 Stops

35 White-water vessels

37 Pallid

38 Horn sound

39 Rim

40 Dweeb

41 Cooped (up)

44 — -Magnon

45 Fish eggs

46 Charged bit

47 Vintage

Solution time: 22 mins.

Yesterday's answer 4-7

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Russell Crowe, 56; Jackie Chan, 66; John Oates, 72; Francis Ford Coppola, 81.

Happy Birthday: Take control of your life. Call the shots, and make changes that will help you gain ground. Greater involvement in projects or activities that give you a chance to use your talents to the fullest will encourage personal growth and success. Partnerships should be priorities, and decisions that will help declutter your life a choice. Your numbers are 2, 8, 24, 26, 31, 37, 42.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): An innovative approach to life will attract favorable attention from like-minded people. Working in conjunction with someone who shares your values, work ethic and goals will lead to the results you desire. Personal gain and romance are favored. ★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Take time to recognize what others do and say. An unexpected change can alter the way you do business or the way you feel about someone you work alongside. Keep your ideas and plans a secret until you have everything in place. ★★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Take pride in what you do, and everyone will take note. A personal change will improve the way you live, how well you take care of yourself and how well you get along with others. Traveling, participating and exploring educational pursuits are favored. ★★★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Actions speak louder than words. If a change is required, don't hesitate. How you handle

matters will make a difference in how well you do. Refuse to let an emotional incident take over. Limit your expenditures as well as the promises you make. ★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Check out vacation destinations or something or someone that interests you. A change doesn't have to be drastic. Consider what will make your life easier. Personal improvements should be on your radar. Romance is encouraged. ★★★★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Put in the work and be open to change, and you will excel. The more you resist, the harder it will be to get ahead. Go with the flow, listen to what others have to contribute and be willing to compromise. ★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Emotions will run wild and lead to poor decisions if you aren't careful. Don't overreact to what others do or say. Give others the space needed to excel. Focus on creative projects, home improvements and personal gains. ★★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Taking on a new project or participating in events that will bring you in contact with people from different walks of life will help you accept necessary adjustments. Don't ruin a good thing to spite someone. ★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Positive change is in the stars, and the chance to make plans is on the rise. A physical improvement will encourage you to use your attributes to get ahead. A romantic gesture will enhance your personal life and improve your attitude. ★★★★★

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

	3			4						
4			7	5	2					
		6		8				5		
	4			3				9	7	
		2				1				
7	5			4				8		
	1			9		3				
		5	1		8					9
			2					6		

Difficulty Level ★★

4/07

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

4	6	8	1	2	9	7	3	5
5	2	9	3	7	6	1	4	8
1	7	3	5	8	4	2	9	6
7	1	2	4	5	8	3	6	9
9	5	4	6	3	1	8	2	7
3	8	6	7	9	2	4	5	1
6	3	1	8	4	5	9	7	2
2	4	5	9	1	7	6	8	3
8	9	7	2	6	3	5	1	4

Big Tally Level ★

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Too much will be just as damaging as too little. Some balance will be required if you want to get ahead. A love relationship or friendship will diminish if you overreact or one of you offers an ultimatum. Bide your time. ★★



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Don't worry about what others are doing. Take care of your responsibilities, and move on to the things that make you happy. A change at home will brighten your day and encourage you to start a creative project. Romance is favored. ★★★★★



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): The more unpredictable you are, the more difficulties you will face. Immerse yourself in something that keeps you busy and out of trouble. Be helpful to others regardless of the circumstances. Make less of a fuss, and you'll avoid confusion and conflict. ★★★

Birthday Baby: You are steadfast, intelligent and strategic. You are determined and observant.

Visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn.

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

FAMOUS MARKS

Solution: 8 letters

W M G N S O L E U S N O C W A
N I C O I E U A E N I T S A G
E E L M O A N H O S K O O R B
W S B K O D W I R L O N D O N
O F E U E R S T E I N E E I L
H S T R E R R O M T A M R R N
A Y S T C R S I N N S A R P O
M R B I E A N O S N O R E Y M
I N O C T N L B N F S K K D R
L E C E C A R G B M O A N E A
L H A E F O G U L D I S I N H
I R J F W B O M B A C K T N B
T T U N S E H C G R N O E E T
W R I G H T M A B C N D L K R
R O T C A L A W A Y E L I A B

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4/7

Acres, Actor, Antony, Bailey, Bell, Bomback, Brooks, Brown, Burnett, Calaway, Chesnut, Consuelos, Darcy, Dean, Feuerstein, Foster, Gastineau, Gatiss, Goodson, Grace, Hamill, Harmon, Henry, Howe, Jacobs, Kennedy, Land, London, Marc, Mark, McMorris, Mero, Mike, Prior, Recchi, Reuben, Ronson, Ruffalo, Saint, Soder, Steines, Tinker, Twain, Wilkerson, Wright

Yesterday's Answer: Potomac

To purchase THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volumes 40, 42, and 44 through 58 order online at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

Patriots looking at rookie QB Morgan



NEW ENGLAND (AP)—Despite the availability of an

unprecedented number of veteran quarterbacks, the Patriots most likely won't be replacing Tom Brady with an established signal-caller. They instead seem to be far more inclined to consider adding a rookie.

Mike Reiss of ESPN.com reported that the Patriots have had a videoconference meeting with Florida International quarterback James Morgan. He's not a top prospect, but Morgan reportedly performed well at the East-West Shrine Game. The Green Bay native modeled his game after Hall of Famer Brett Favre.

That said, it's hard to attach much significance to a single video conference, since every team can talk to every prospect for up to an hour at a time, three times per week.

The highlight reel is impressive, but the level of competition at FIU is much lower than the biggest of big-time college football. Then again, the Patriots harvested Jimmy Garoppolo from Eastern Illinois six years ago, so maybe they've figured out how to spot ability even when it's not obvious that it will translate to the NFL.

Morgan currently isn't regarded among the top quarterbacks in the draft. But this is about the time when guys supposedly "rise up the board," which is code for "the people in the media who ultimately have



AP
In this Feb. 27, 2020 file photo, Florida International quarterback James Morgan runs a drill at the NFL football scouting combine in Indianapolis.

no idea what teams think about these prospects start to hear what the teams think and adjust their rankings accordingly."

Meanwhile, the Raiders stocked up in free agency, spending big to fix a defense that was leaky at best in 2019.

Coach Jon Gruden and general manager Mike Mayock now must turn their attention to hitting another home run in the NFL draft. With the No. 12 and No. 19 overall picks, most expect the Raiders, who have glar-

ing needs at wide receiver and cornerback, to address those holes in some manner with their first two picks. That might not be where Gruden and Mayock are planning to go, though.

Bleacher Report's Matt Miller reported, citing league sources, that most around the league expect the Silver and Black to draft a top wide receiver with the No. 12 pick, but use their second pick on a "middle-of-the-field" defender since the Raiders would like

to make an upgrade at defensive tackle.

The middle of the field was a massive problem for the Raiders' defense in 2019. But they went out and added defensive tackle Maliek Collins and linebacker Nick Kwiatkowski to lead the unit. They also lucked into signing safety Damarious Randall, upgrading the middle of the field at all three levels.

However, the Raiders do still need some help in the

middle of their defensive line. Collins is young and thrives beating double teams, but he only signed a one-year deal. Maurice Hurst had a nice 2019 but he still needs to improve and Johnathan Hankins, while great against the run, doesn't move the needle rushing the passer.

If the Raiders do want to draft a defensive tackle—it might not be the best use of a first-round pick—there are a few elite talents they could look at.

Derrick Brown leads this year's defensive tackle class. The 6-foot-5, 318-pound Auburn product might be the most complete defensive tackle to enter the draft since Aaron Donald. He has powerful hands, an unreal motor and can play in odd and even fronts. He's a Day 1 plug-and-play starter with All-Pro potential. Brown is expected to be a Top 10 pick so the likelihood of him donning and Silver and Black is low.

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Bill Polian simplified the NFL's draft process years ago.

He studied film, relied on medical experts, checked the numbers and interviewed players.

With the flurry of pro days canceled because of the new coronavirus, the Hall of Fame executive who constructed multiple Super Bowl teams during his 32-year career believes it's time for a return to his throwback approach.

"Really all you need, and it's especially true in a time like today, you need the game film, the physical exam, which may be difficult to get right now, and the measurables," he told The Associated Press. "So if a player has been to the combine, that's all you really need. If a player hasn't been to the combine or is from a small school, then you've just got to go on the game film and you'd be slightly less accurate."

"And the people who haven't done it as long as I did are probably a little discombobulated about that right now."

Pro day cancellations forcing changes to NFL draft process

Younger scouts, front-office executives and even coaches find themselves coping with a whole new draft process with Americans hunkering down and doctors overwhelmed by the mounting cases of COVID-19.

Gone for the most part this year are access to in-person interviews, on-campus workouts and visits to team headquarters. Also gone are some of the numbers garnered at pro days that decision-makers like to crunch as they becoming increasingly reliant on advanced metrics.

That combination has forced everyone to rethink how they do business.

Zoom and Skype meetings have become commonplace.

Draft prospects are offering to send homemade videos of workouts and drills to NFL teams.

Some college coaches are making a more concerted effort to sell the players who didn't get a chance to work out in front of NFL scouts.

Even agents find them-

selves playing new roles.

"I feel like more of a mental health counselor than ever before because some of these kids have been so stressed out to not have the opportunity to showcase what they've worked for their whole life," said David Moreno, who represents about 10 pro prospects.

Everybody agrees that top-tier players such as Heisman Trophy winner Joe Burrow of LSU or defensive end Chase Young of Ohio State won't be hurt by the cancellations. They did enough in their college careers—and it's all on tape. Plus, they met with team officials and went through the medical checks at the NFL's annual scouting combine in Indianapolis.

Some players with medical concerns, such as Alabama's Tua Tagovailoa, the 2018 Heisman Trophy runner-up, or Colorado receiver Laviska Shenault Jr. probably won't see a precipitous drop in their stock either.

And those who competed in college all-star games but

didn't receive a combine invite, like Indiana receiver Nick Westbrook, also have the advantage of performing in front of scouts.

Many others find themselves in limbo.

"I just feel horrible for all these kids that aren't combine guys and put in all this work and now they're just kind of stuck," agent Ron Slavin said.

The stories are endless.

Slavin represents eight draft-eligible players, including Houston punter Dane Roy, who returned home to Australia for his wedding before the school's March 31 workout was called off. Roy doesn't know when he'll be back in the U.S.

Westbrook was working out in Seattle—until the pandemic started shutting down the city. So the Indiana receiver moved in with his parents in Florida but has struggled to find a workout facility.

Lehigh's top receiver, Devon Bibbens actually missed out on three pro days—two at Temple and one at Delaware.

He is back home in Pennsylvania, using his old high-school regimen to stay in shape.

"I'm lucky enough that I have some equipment in my garage—dumbbells, a barbell, a pull-up bar, field equipment. My high school has a hill," Bibbens said. "These are the workouts I did in high school, so getting back to those things is honestly kind of fun."

Still, nothing can really replace missing time in front of NFL scouts. So coaches are pitching in.

Illinois was one of the few major schools to conduct a pro day before travel restrictions were imposed, so coach Lovie Smith has spent his days responding to follow-up questions.

At Georgia, coach Kirby Smart said he's been contacted personally by five NFL teams and answers text messages daily in an effort to help his players, especially those under the radar.

"The guys that didn't get to go to the combine that are re-

ally football players, I worry for them, for their sake," Smart said. "You feel good when you go out there and you go perform, whether you perform good or bad, you feel good that you got your opportunity."

It's not just the football component that disappoints players, it's the uncertainty.

"Not knowing what's going to happen and even if the draft takes place on time, whether the minicamps start up and all those unknowns is probably the hardest thing to deal with right now," Westbrook said.

But Polian has a reassuring message for borderline prospects: NFL teams have been unearthing talent for decades—many years with no combine and no pro days.

"That's why we have scouts," he said. "They've seen the player up close and personal and can do a pretty good assessment of all the measurables and the physical. If they need additional information, I'm sure the school will give it to them. ... If you have good scouts, you're in great shape."

MLB shortened season likened to '81 strike



**N E W
YORK**—Major League

Baseball's opening day has been pushed back multiple times, and currently, there is no set date for when the regular season will begin due to the coronavirus pandemic.

That being said, the league made an agreement with players that the season's beginning would entirely depend on recommendations set forth by the Centers for Disease Control.

And while players have been open about wanting to play the entirety of a 162-game season, both sides hope to play at least 100. A shortened season could be imminent.

Dave Stewart, a former A's pitcher and now an analyst at NBC Sports California, recently spoke to Brodie Brazil about what could happen if the season were to have less than what we're used to. Stewart compared it to the 1981 strike in certain ways.

"In 1981, we went on strike, and we lost 60 games, so we played 102 games that year," Stewart said. "It actually worked out pretty well. We played the seasons in halves, it was a round-robin playoff, it worked well."

"Once you start looking at 100 [games]—in that range, I think the season puts itself in jeopardy," he added.

The monetary losses were astronomical during the '81 strike, but a compromise was reached at the end of July that year.

The season was split into



On June 13, 1981, there was supposed to be a Chicago Cubs baseball game. Due to the strike, the game was cancelled.

AP

two (before, and after the strike) which worked out for certain teams, but also forced promising teams to miss out on playoff hopes.

MLB has laid many ideas out on the table for what could happen should the season begin in 2020. Seven-inning double-headers have been discussed in order for the season to reach as close to that 162 number as possible with mid-May being the best-case scenario to start.

Recently, MLB and the MLB Players Association agreed the 2020 season could not begin while there are still travel bans, mass gatherings bans that limit the ability to play in front of fans, and until medical experts determine the games would not pose a risk to the health of teams and fans.

Battle for Red Sox's starter slot

The Boston Red Sox have serious concerns with their

pitching staff. With Chris Sale out for the long haul after undergoing Tommy John surgery, the Red Sox are down to just a few known commodities among their starting rotation.

Eduardo Rodriguez will be the team's ace. Nathan Eovaldi and Martin Perez will follow him in the rotation. But the fourth and fifth spots in the rotation are a bit harder to predict.

Before Sale's surgery and before the MLB shut down op-

erations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it seemed like Ryan Weber was the leading candidate to earn a job on the back-end of the rotation. If he's the fourth starter, that will leave the Sox with just one hole to fill in the fifth starter slot.

And one possibility for that role would be Darwinzon Hernandez. The lefthander pitched in 29 games for the Red Sox last season logging a 4.45 ERA and 57 strikeouts in 30 1/3 innings pitched. Hernandez only made one start for the Sox, but he considers himself to be a starter at the MLB level.

"Everyone knows I'd love to start. Absolutely," Hernandez said, per Peter Abraham of The Boston Globe. "That is what every pitcher wants and I still feel like I can do it. I enjoyed being a reliever and I'll do whatever the team asks. The important thing is to be on the team. But, yes, I want to start."

Hernandez was a starter during his time in the minor leagues and has started at least 12 games per season since 2015. The 23-year-old still has a lot of upside and he believes that he's ready to take on a starting job.

"I'm ready. I've matured as [a] pitcher," Hernandez said through a translator. "In the minors, I would just throw but when I got to the majors, they taught me how to pitch and the importance of working hard and locating your pitches, mixing your pitches. I learned how to pitch and not just throw."

Of course, the decision will ultimately come down to Ron

Roenicke. And the Sox skipper at least seemed open to Hernandez battling for a starting job before spring training was shut down.

"You have to consider [starting Hernandez]," Roenicke said last month. "He's still a young pitcher and there's a lot to work with. I could see us looking at this again and giving him a chance to start."

Hernandez will have some competition for that final spot. The Red Sox did sign Collin McHugh after Sale's setback. The former Houston Astros pitcher could be a starter or bullpen arm, but he'll have to get healthy first. He was battling an elbow injury upon joining the team and it's unclear exactly when he'll return to action.

The team could also choose to use the opener strategy that the Tampa Bay Rays have popularized in recent seasons. Could that involve Hernandez playing that role? Or being the "bulk" guy to take on innings once the opener is done? It's surely possible.

It's tough to know what the Red Sox are going to do with their rotation. They'll likely have to mix and match things if and when the season does begin. But that could be a while away.

For the time being, Roenicke will have more time to think about just how he wants his pitching staff to shake out. And with rosters to be expanded in wake of the pandemic, per Joel Sherman of The New York Post, Roenicke may opt to try a few different solutions before settling on his preferred option.

Giannis doesn't have home court; players find ways to stay fit



MILWAUKEE—Giannis Antetokounmpo is spending much of his time during the coronavirus-imposed hiatus working out, helping care for his newborn son and playing occasional video games.

What the reigning MVP isn't doing very often is shooting baskets since the NBA has closed team practice facilities.

"I don't have access to a hoop," the Milwaukee Bucks forward said during a conference call. "A lot of NBA players might have a court in their house or something. I don't know, but now I just get my home workouts, (go) on the bike, treadmill, lift weights, stay sharp that way."

The hiatus is forcing thousands of athletes, pro and otherwise, to work out from home as they try to keep in shape. Equipment varies from player to player, too.

"It all comes down to what

they have and what they're capable of doing," Atlanta Hawks coach Lloyd Pierce said. "We can do a lot of body weight stuff. That's how they stay ready. That's the most I can offer as a coach for them to stay ready. I can't say 'Hey, can you find access to a gym?' That would be bad management on my part."

For instance, Pierce said Hawks guard Kevin Huerter has access to a gym in New York and guard Jeff Teague owns a gym in Indiana.

Other players face different situations.

"I've seen LeBron's Instagram," Pierce said of Los Angeles Lakers superstar LeBron James. "LeBron has a house with a full weight room and he has an outdoor court. He's got a different reality right now that gives him a little more access to continue the normal. (Hawks rookie) Cam Reddish lives in an apartment and it's probably a two-bedroom apartment. He can't go in the apartment weight room be-

cause it's a public facility. So he's limited in all things."

Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said he wanted his players to focus on keeping their bodies in shape and conceded that logistics surrounding the pandemic would make it tougher for them to do any basketball-specific activities.

The Bucks are still finding ways to stay sharp.

Bucks players said team officials have made sure they all have the necessary exercise equipment. Antetokounmpo noted the Bucks also had a catering company bring food to make sure they maintain a proper diet. Center Brook Lopez said workout plans have been sent to them via a phone app.

"They've done a really good job of getting everything taken care of and still having tailored workouts for each individual player despite the situation," Lopez said.

But it's difficult for them to work on their shooting without access to a court.

"Since the practice facil-

ity is closed down, I don't have any access to a basketball goal unless I go to one of my neighbors' houses and shoot outside," Bucks forward Khristian Middleton said. "There's really no basketball for me. It's basically like Giannis said. Treadmill, jump rope, some weights and that's it. I have a couple of basketballs I can dribble in my house or outside, but no actual goal to shoot on."

Pierce noted that Huerter recently asked him when players would be able to get back into the Hawks' practice facility.

"I told him, 'I'll tell you when we won't,'" Pierce said. "We won't in April."

Meanwhile, Indiana Pacers general manager Chad Buchanan has reportedly declined an opportunity to interview for a front office job with the Chicago Bulls.

Buchanan joined the Pacers in 2017 as their general manager under President of Basketball Operations Kevin Pritchard.

MLS' 25th remains quiet milestone amid pandemic

Sporting Kansas City coach Peter Vermes is cautiously optimistic that Major League Soccer can still have a full season.

But what that might look like is anyone's guess.

MLS was supposed to be celebrating its 25th year, but for now it remains a quiet milestone amid the coronavirus pandemic. Monday marks the anniversary of the league's first game, when the San Jose Clash hosted D.C. United at Spartan Stadium before 31,000 fans.

The league has overcome crisis before, like in 2002 when the MLS contracted by two teams and its future was in doubt. But nothing quite like this.

"I think one of the saving graces that we have is that last year we shaved off a month of

our season on the back end. And so now we have that back end to kind of help us. So I actually think that it's feasible," Vermes said. "I believe that

we'll get through this and have our season and all those things will come together."

Teams were just two games into the season when play was suspended because of the new coronavirus.

The shutdown came at what otherwise would have been a high point.

Nashville and Miami joined the league this season, bringing the number of clubs to 26, with four more on the way in coming years. Inter Miami, David Beckham's team, was preparing for its home opener when the delay took effect.

Multiple league sources



AP
In this Feb. 29, 2020 file photo, Vancouver Whitecaps goalkeeper Maxime Crepeau dives to make a save against Sporting Kansas City during the first half of an MLS soccer match in Vancouver, British Columbia.

served as a very solid foundation for the next several years of growth. And the men's national team went through the quarterfinals of the World Cup, and that helped really bring a lot of optimism about the future for soccer in the United States and the role that the league was playing because the players that scored the goals, Landon Donovan and Clint Mathis, were players that were playing in the league," said MLS President Mark Abbott, who was the league's first-ever employee.

By 2005, the league was expanding again, adding Real Salt Lake and Chivas USA. In 2007, Beckham joined the LA Galaxy, ushering in the era of the high-profile designated player.

On the day Inter Miami was supposed to host the Galaxy for its home opener, Beckham and his family went to the team's temporary stadium in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The Spice Girls' "Spice Up Your Life" played on the stadium's PA system—fitting since Beckham's wife, Victoria, was part of the group.

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after Schorr finally got into the board, 1-4. When the match resumed the following day, Schorr stole the opening set with a hard-earned 7-5 victory and completed the upset with a 6-4 triumph in the second.

Meanwhile, Woo, Malika Miyawaki, and Ken Song are the other U18 players with 1,000-plus ranking points this season. Woo has earned 1,350 points, while Miyawaki and

Song have 1,250 and 1,100 markers, respectively.

Woo got 750 for his runner-up finish in the TanHoldings tournament and 600 for making it to the semis of the SIS-sponsored event. Miyawaki took 500 points (semis) in the first competition and 750 (third place) in the second, while Song bagged 600 points in the TanHoldings event and 500 in the SIS contests.

Other players in the ranking list are Sean Lee (800 points), Sam Ryu (300), and Isaac Heo (250).

told The Associated Press last week that the preference is to still play a 34-game season—with fans in attendance. However, that possibility grew dimmer with the U.S. government's recommendation to extend social distancing guidelines to April 30.

Among the options available is returning to the league's old calendar, which extended into December. The league shortened the season last year, in part by eliminating two-legged playoffs.

Another option is eliminating some non-league matches, like the expanded Leagues Cup competition with Liga

MX teams.

Players are currently "in market" with their teams until at least April 24. The season is officially on hold until a target date of May 10, although that now appears unrealistic. One MLS player has tested positive for the virus, a Philadelphia Union player who had mild symptoms.

The league has had to weather storms before.

MLS lost \$250 million in its first five years. While the league had expanded in 1998 to 12 teams with the addition of the Miami Fusion and the Chicago Fire, MLS was soon in trouble. It culminated in 2002

when the Fusion and the Tampa Bay Mutiny folded and the league contracted to 10 teams. Just three owners were left: Colorado billionaire Phil Anschutz owned six of the teams.

Current Commissioner Don Garber, who took the job in 1999, was instrumental in leading MLS back. The league made several significant changes but also had some luck: The U.S. men's national team advanced to the quarterfinals of the 2002 World Cup in South Korea, creating renewed enthusiasm for the sport back home.

"In 2002, we started to implement that strategy. And it

NORITA

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program when he was 9 years old and immediately made an impact in the competition, as he won the batting title in his rookie season.

"He was also an all-star in every year that he played in the league. Ned made it to the Big League World Series in Florida," said Camacho.

Ned, a police officer with the Department of Public Safety, now has switched to softball, but still has that powerful swing, which he also uses to tame the greens and fairways of the various golf courses on Saipan.

Ned came into the Little League because of his older brother, Bruce.

"Smashing homeruns in the old San Vicente field before his younger brother Ned joined the Braves, Bruce has been an all-star multiple times. He's not only dangerous at the plate, but also an excellent defensive player," Camacho said.

The older Norita is also now into softball and although Camacho still admires how Bruce kept his deadly swing, the Braves manager is prouder of how the player always displays sportsmanship and has become a role model in the



TENNESSEE TECH
Justin Alexander delivers a pitch for the Tennessee Tech in this undated file photo.

community, especially among the youth.

The Norita siblings powered the Braves in the Little League competition in the 1990s, while about a decade later, a new star up north shone in Jones.

"Josh's baseball career was recognized throughout the Pacific region. He's an amazing south paw pitcher. His command on the ball is like no other. He may not be the hardest thrower, but his off-speed pitches were wicked. Josh

could take down a team almost by himself," Camacho said.

Rival Guam felt what's it like to be up against Jones during the gold medal match in the 2011 Pacific Games in New Caledonia.

With the CNMI behind, 0-2, Jones came to pitch for the Commonwealth in the third inning and anchored the squad's come-from-behind win, 8-4. He gave up no earned run and allowed only three hits to hand



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
University of West Alabama's Josh Jones throws during one of their games in the NCAA.

the Commonwealth's its only gold medal in the quadrennial event. The Braves pride recorded 42 strikeouts in the competition.

Jones returned to play for the CNMI in the Pacific Games after moving up to the collegiate ranks where he got an athletics scholarship with Colby Community College. He led Colby to a championship in 2013 before suiting up for the University of West Ala-

bama in the NCAA.

"Josh was highly recruited to play on Guam, but opted to seek bigger things. Josh played baseball in college on a full-time scholarship. Josh's college career stats speak for themselves. Currently, Josh continues to play softball where his hard hitting is on full display," Camacho said.

All-around athlete

Another Braves player who

earned a chance to play collegiate baseball was Alexander.

"I have not seen a harder throwing pitcher as Justin during my time in Little League. Justin was not only amazing on the mound, but he can also play other positions. Justin was an all-star during his Little League career," Camacho said.

Alexander went on to play for Tennessee Tech and also played college football (quarterback).

"He's a true all-around athlete, with a deadly drive when he plays golf," Camacho said.

Killer lefty

Lifofoi was another prized find for the Braves.

A lefty, Camacho said Lifofoi is a shutout pitcher.

"If he isn't catching flies from center field, he is throwing heat on the mound. J.J. pitches hard, but also can mix it up with changes," said Camacho.

Lifofoi made it to the CNMI All-Star teams several times and has now taken his acts to the Saipan Major League. He is also a firefighter.

Meanwhile, *Saipan Tribune* will publish the names and accomplishments of the five other Braves players that Camacho selected in the Wednesday edition of the paper.



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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Norita brothers Jones stand out

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Though its season is on hold, Saipan Little League Baseball is undoubtedly a highly anticipated competition here annually, as it features up-and-coming players and provide the CNMI a glimpse of the future of the sport on island.

Schorr leads U18 ranking

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

As expected, Pacific Games gold medalist Robbie Schorr is ahead in the boys U18 division of the CNMI Junior Tennis Rankings.

Schorr earned back-to-back singles championships in the age group to gain 2,000 ranking points and pace six other players in the leaderboard.

Schorr topped the Tan Holdings Tennis Classic held in November last year

after earning a 4-0 record in the round-robin competition. He secured the division title following a 6-2, 3-6, 13-11 victory over Jimin Woo.

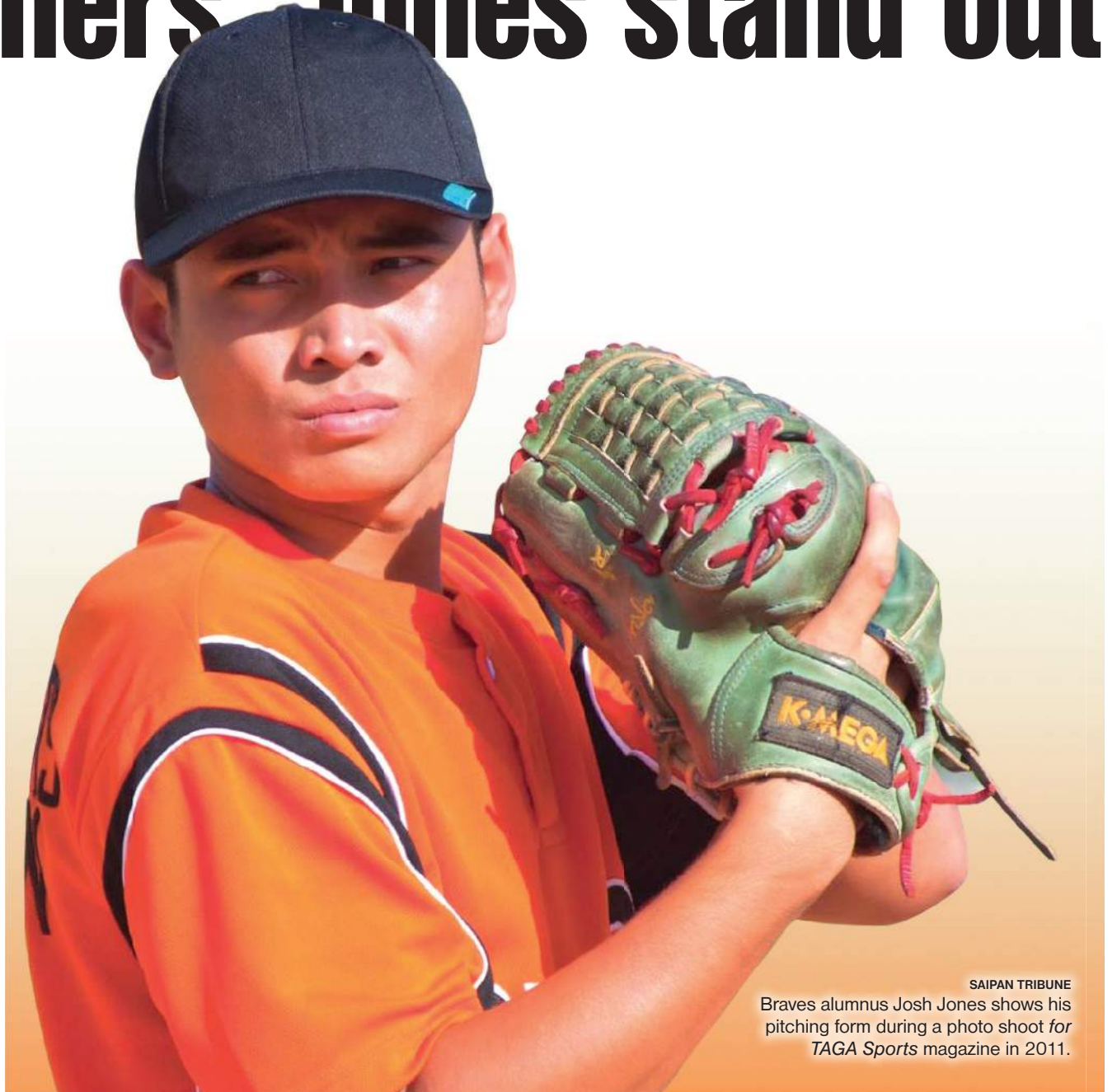
Then in the 2020 Saipan International School STUCO Tournament last January, Schorr had another tough finals match when he met fellow Pacific Games gold medalist Carol Lee, who went up, 4-0, in the first set of the championship game. Play was then halted by rain

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Robbie Schorr hits from the baseline during his game against Ken Song in a local tournament at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan tennis courts.



SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Braves alumnus Josh Jones shows his pitching form during a photo shoot for TAGA Sports magazine in 2011.

The Braves are one of the teams that regularly compete in the SLLB, fielding squads in the Minor, Major, Junior, Senior, and Big League (when the event was still in the program) divisions.

"The Braves have been a member of the Saipan Little League almost since the in-

ception of youth baseball in the CNMI. A lot of our kids have gone through the program," Braves manager George N. Camacho said.

"More importantly, these former Braves Little League players have progressed and have become contributing



members of the community," added Camacho, who was asked to select the Top 10 Braves players that stood out in the program. "Obviously, there are far more than 10 and too many to mention all names."

In no particular order,

Camacho selected siblings Ned and Bruce Norita, Josh Jones, Justin Alexander, and J.J. Lifoifo, and recalled their outstanding performances while proudly donning the Braves' uniform.

Ned joined the Little League

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO

A Braves batter waits for the pitch during their Minor division game in the Saipan Little League Baseball at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Ballfield. The Braves are a regular participant in the SLLB program.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ned Norita, second left, poses with his fellow police officers with the Department of Public Safety in this undated photo.